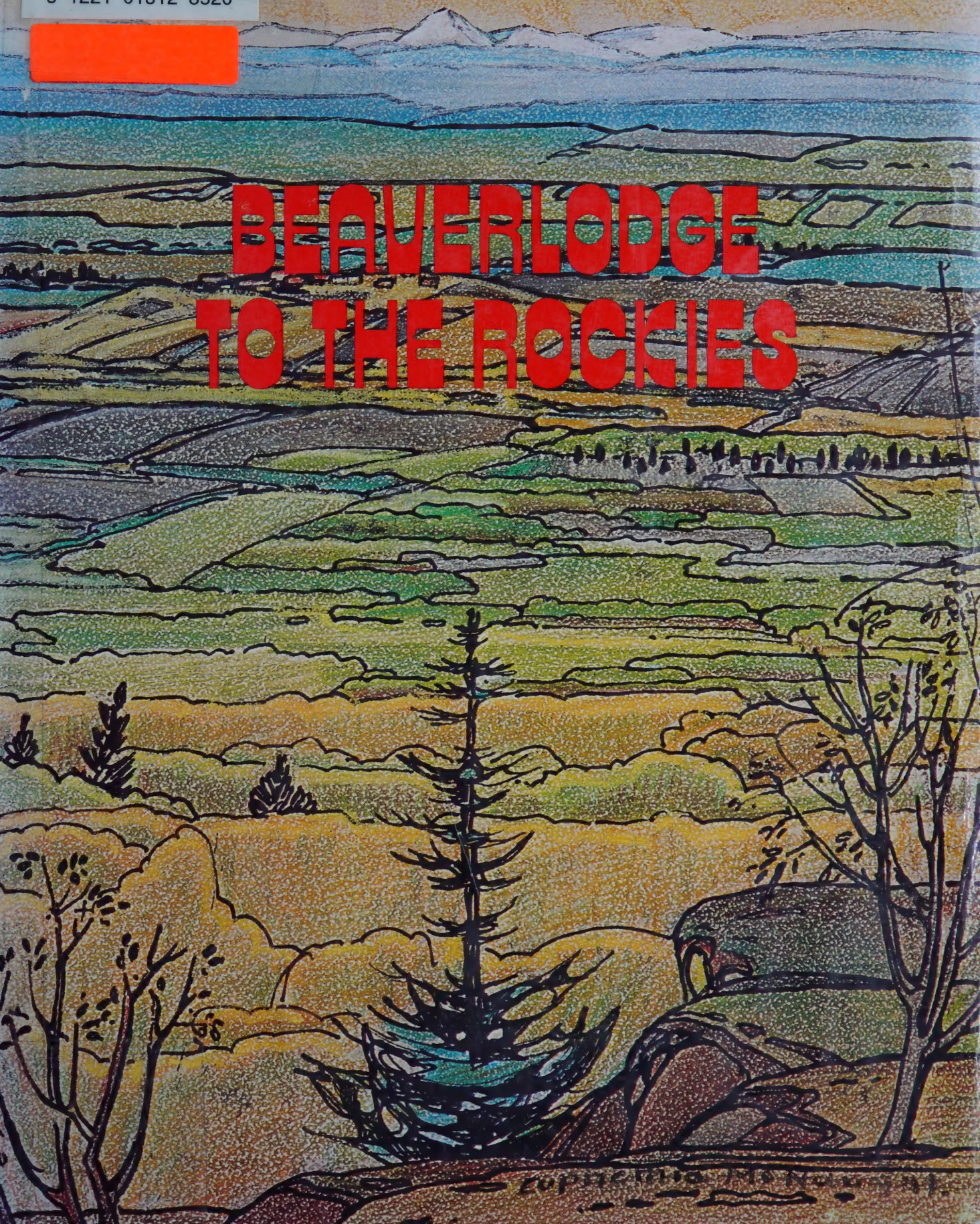




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# BEAVERLODGE TO THE ROCKIES















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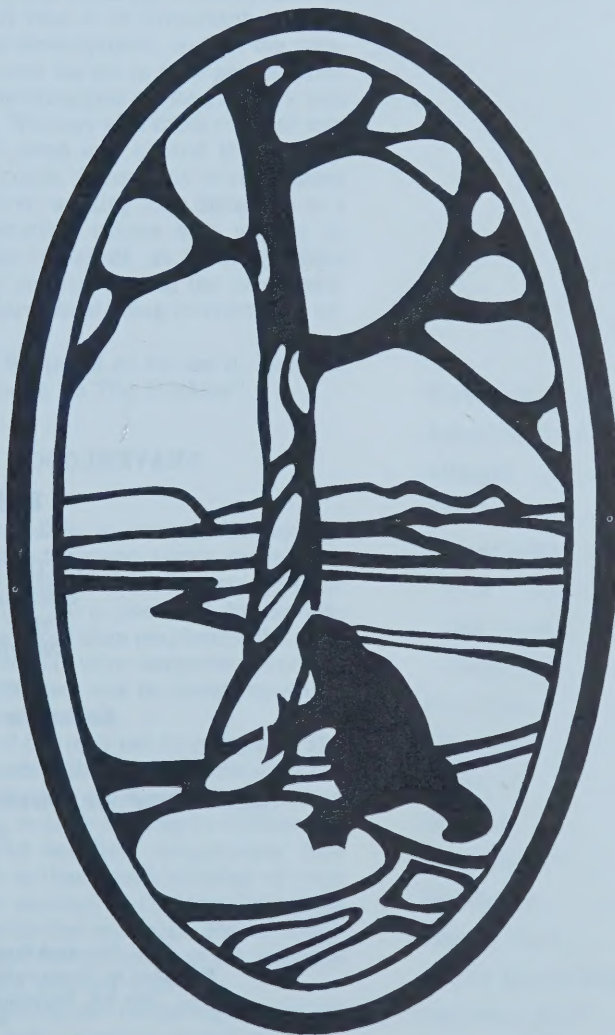


E.M.C.N.





# BEAVERLODGE TO THE ROCKIES





**BEAVERLODGE TO THE ROCKIES**

**EDITOR**

**E. C. Stacey**

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS**

**Madelon Truax**

**Percy Hunkin**

**Evelyn Stacey**

**ARTIST**

**Euphemia MacNaught**

**PUBLISHERS**

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## FOREWORD

The story of the development of a region, whether in its pioneer stages or as it is progressing into a mature settlement, is the record of its people and the conditions under which they lived. This account attempts to give full credit to the early settlers but has equal concern with those who possibly half a century later were still pioneering. Both have contributed to the present scene and thus it is important to have complete record of the development, so that the present generation can assess its lot in true perspective.

We may think of the struggles of the pioneers who braved the long trails. We may also think of those who cleared their land by hand and hauled the crop to market over winding roads. Some may even shudder at the thought of children walking long distances to a small log school. Tomorrow others may wonder at bussing pupils 30 miles to school, at farming where costs are high and the returns beyond the producers' control and of choice farm land being converted to urban development.

What is the story? We tell it as we see it, by those residents in "Beaverlodge To The Rockies".

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This historical record is a compilation by the residents of the district in their own terms and encompassing their own interests. As such it portrays their thoughts and memories on a personal basis. The authors have done little more than emphasize the need for the record and at times to urge complete coverage. The only editing undertaken was to avoid repetition and to enhance the presentation.

The coverage is good but may not be complete. The residents of the district had the choice of deciding the extent of their contribution to the development; a committee was set up in each locality to further the work and each enjoyed excellent cooperation. The compilers in turn wish to thank each member of each committee for faithful service, so that they had little more to do than assemble the material. The art work of Euphemia McNaught stands alone in its splendid depiction of pioneer and modern days.

All the effort in collecting and compiling the record was voluntary and only routine expenses were charged. The funds to meet these expenses were paid in part from a generous grant received under the New Horizons program of Health and Welfare, Canada, for which the Beaverlodge and District Historical Association is duly appreciative.

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# ALBRIGHT

The area lying midway between the towns of Beaverlodge and Hythe and on the east side of the Beaverlodge River to the Valhalla road, saw its first settlers arriving around 1916. Some of the originals were the Chandlers, Hawthornes, Packs and Robsons. A little later there were Hodges, Wedells, Biesels, Kyles, Wrights, Sutherlands, Ervins, Kerrs, Cunninghams, Lays, Morgenstjernes, Halsteads, Purves, Eastmans and others.

Two years later, 1918 the North Beaverlodge School district No. 3524 was formed and the first frame school in the area was erected. Originally logs were obtained to build the school but at the instigation of the Department of Education a frame building was built and the logs were used for a barn. The school, known as North Beaverlodge was situated on the southwest corner of the NW 27-72-10-W6th on the land donated by Gordon Hurley. The pioneer teacher in the fall of 1918 was Miss Nellie Robson, now Mrs. Healing. Some of her first pupils were Delmer, Evelyn and Dorothy Hawthorne, Arvid, Everett, Carl and Signe Wedell, Thelma, Fred and Nellie Chandler, Lloyd, Sherwood and Bob Pack and Guy Hurley's two children, Hazel and Raymond.

The early records of this school were destroyed in a fire when Mrs. Agnew was secretary. The first chairman was Bill Pack, and the first secretary was Bill Hawthorne.

Other teachers who taught in this school over the years were Miss Walper, Mr. Keeping, now living at Demmitt, Judd Perry, Mrs. Campbell, Miss Johnson, Miss Kathy Robson now Mrs. Knut Tveiten, Mrs.

Craig, Miss Simpson, Mrs. Bricker, Ed Nepstad, Jimmy Fisher, Miss Aikenhead, Mrs. Isobel Perry, Bud Eggenberger, Mrs. Halstead, Bert Nicholson, Mrs. Irma Toth, Mrs. Jean Smith and Mrs. Joyce McLean. Miss Audrey Sutherland, now Mrs. Joe Lowe, was the last teacher before a school bus route was established in 1954. The last pupils were Brian Peace, Norman Beck, the Pack girls, Mary Ellen and the twins Connie and Shirley, Donnie O'Brien, Billy and Donnie Hurley, Lyle, Ruth and Joyce Jones, Roberta and David Cunningham. Over the years the classes had ranged from 42 to 13 pupils. The school children put on their annual Christmas Concert in the school until the Albright Hall was built. Then the practicing and memorizing of lines and drills was done at the school. Then in a sleigh over to the hall for rehearsals and the final concert. Gimle and North Beaverlodge chose their concert nights so that the residents of the districts could attend both performances.

One night Mrs. Santa Claus, Hilda Stephens, who had a new parka sent from the north by her brother came along to help Mr. Santa Claus as he had supposedly broken his leg. The money for the candy was raised by the school board canvassing the district. The stores, Gaudins and Adams donated oranges and apples, the butcher shop also donated apples.

Mabel Peace spent many days over the years helping the children practise their carols. She walked down through the snowdrifts, and then went over to Hodges some years to play the piano, and at the hall for concerts as well. One person who enjoyed the concerts and packing the bags was Jack Hawthorne. For many years he was the Master of Ceremonies for the concert; he was very community minded and helped in other ways, but he really enjoyed the





North Beaverlodge school 1933-34. Mrs. Amy Bricker teacher.



Last pupils of the North Beaverlodge School, September, 1954. Back row: Lyle Jones, Brian Peace, Norman Beck, Mary Ellen Pack, Donnie O'Brien, Billy Hurley. Middle row: Shirley Pack, Connie Pack, Ruth Jones. Front row: Donnie Hurley, Roberta Fletcher, David Cunningham, Joyce Jones.

children. Some of the ones who spent many years on the school board were Jack Hawthorne, Bert Cunningham, Billy Halstead, who'd walk over in the winter carrying a lantern, Russell Wright and Mr. and Mrs. V. C. Hodges.

Through the years before the hall was built the school was a centre for get-togethers. Now neither the school nor teacherage is there. David Cunningham farms the land and Everett Wedell moved the school to Grande Prairie and converted it into a duplex in the Macklinville area.

#### ALBRIGHT BALL TEAMS

These ball teams played during different times. They were formed for the fun of playing, not winning trophies. No one remembers any trophies even existing anywhere; there were no leagues, only the occasional tournament — these grew out of playing different teams at various picnics.

The Gimle Men's Baseball team began in the early 20's. George and Henry Anderson were the pitchers and Ralph Carrell caught for them, other members were Harry, August and Paul Bisbing, Ralph

Anderson, Henry, Johnny, Lester and Alex Hommy, Gene Davis, Chris Sylvester and Bert Cunningham. They were a good ball club and played teams from Rio Grande, Wembley, Dawson Creek and Hythe. Before they folded in the late 30's Paul, August and Red Nowoczin had joined and later August did much of the catching.

In the 30's the women of Albright also had a softball team. This was strictly for fun as one of the members said, she can't remember them ever winning a game but they surely had a lot of laughs, as the time Fred Pack took them in his car up to Lymburn to play and they got lost in the Horse Lake Reserve. On this team were Esther Cunningham, Flo Byers, Rita Barrick, Gladys and Vera Chandler, Annie Wurtz, Edna and Eva Pack, Margaret Eastman, Myrtle Kyle. Mel Byers was coach and he said his wife Flo that if she didn't run so long in one place, she'd get from one base to the next.

About this time the Albright Men's softball team was formed; they too played for fun about two or three times a week and on Sundays. They were a good team. There were rules that allowed only the catcher and first baseman a glove. The catcher used no catcher's mask or protector, that rule came in later, and he took quite a few good bumps. A collection was taken up to buy a couple of balls and bats. Jack Hawthorne, an enthusiastic ball fan, was always their manager and took some of the teams in his car to play games while the rest rode horseback. On this team were the Packs, Sherwood, Bob, Virgil and Vivian, the catcher, the Pikes, Kelly the first pitcher, Henry and Bruce and Teddy Cook. Later the Nowoczin boys, Paul and August who caught, Walter Kyle, Allan Eastman, Jack Bliss and Ed Barrick. They played teams from Goodfare, Lymburn, Glass Lake and Mountain Trail. In the 50's and 60's Sherwood Pack and George Beck coached and managed, then Ken, Jack and Cecil Pack played as well as Johnny Pike, Lewis Pack, grandson of Bill Pack, an avid ball fan who at the age of 70 would play a couple of innings of ball at a picnic, Brian and Don Peace, Eric Hodges and Eugene Cunningham.

The first diamond was on Louis Biesel's land, kitty corner from the hall.

#### ALBRIGHT TELEPHONE

Until 1954 the only telephone connection was a pay-phone in the Albright store. That year the Albright Mutual Telephone Company was organized with 10 subscribers, Oscar Gudlaugson, president and Basil Peace, secretary. This was later increased to 17 before phone operations were taken over by A.G.T.

Other secretaries were Mollie Hodges and Mary Fletcher. Repairmen were Jim and Eric Hodges.

#### BEAR PAW ABBOTT

John Ballinger (Bear Paw) Abbott came from a well to-do family in Colorado. He followed the Boman Trail to California and became a stage coach driver, handling six horses.

Eventually he moved to the Beaverlodge Valley and had a shack on the Cody place, later the William Hodges place, which was the land Oliver Johnson had originally selected for his son, Arnold. It seems that he

had come to the Peace to "get away from it all". He had a camera and a team of mules and for a while lived in a cave on the Beaverlodge river. He preferred to live in the open where, as he is reported to have remarked, "You just shake a tree and the table is set."

Oliver Johnson went with him to Edson on one occasion, each driving two horses, and Oliver commented that he was an excellent horseman. He was a powerful man and probably packed a mean punch, hence the name "Bear Paw". Once he offered to pay for oat bundles with, "If you want anyone beaten up, just send him over."

Abbott lived with Stones when he became older and died in a Senior Citizens' Home at Red Deer, over 90 years old.

#### THE WILLIAM AGNEW STORY — by Lena Larsen

Mr. and Mrs. William Agnew came to the North Beaverlodge district in 1916 or '17 and filed on a homestead. They had never lived on a farm before. William was a machinist by trade.

Mrs. Agnew had two children from a previous marriage. Bessie, the daughter did not stay long in this country but the son, George Wilson was well known around Beaverlodge. He passed away in B.C. some years ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Agnew had a son Weldon and a daughter Louise of their own. In 1923 they sold out and moved to Bakersfield, California. George accompanied them but did not stay long, soon returning to Beaverlodge.

We, that is Sam and Lena Larsen, visited the Agnews in California. The weather was very hot the days we were there — the temperature registering 120 degrees. And that is HOT!

Mr. and Mrs. Agnew passed away many years ago. The Agnew children, Louise and Weldon remained in the States while Bessie Wilson, who is married and has two children, moved to B.C. and still lives there.

#### THE ALBRIGHT COMMUNITY HALL

The residents of the North Beaverlodge and Gimle school districts felt the need for a hall, a place for the Christmas concerts, dances and other community functions. The schools were too small to accommodate them. Hence on November 28, 1929 in the North Beaverlodge school the motion was made by Olaf Hommy, seconded by Mrs. Andrew Johnson "Do we want the hall?" The motion carried. The building was to be a frame one 30' x 50'. Lorne Kerr offered the site for the hall at the Albright siding, which was accepted. The officers were elected: Olaf Hommy, president; Lorne Kerr, vice-president; secretary Andrew Johnson. The board of directors were H. Morgenstjerne, Jack Hawthorne, August Bisbing, Louis Biesel and Ken Eastman. It was moved by Mrs. Lorne Kerr and seconded by Hugh Thompson that the name be The Albright Community Hall Association. There would be no charge for community activities held in the hall. A membership fee of \$1.00 was to be collected from residents who wished to subscribe. On the collection committee were Ken Eastman, H. Morgenstjerne, Ven Hodges and Paul Bisbing. The hall was to be a reality.

## Grand Opening Ball

Of Albright Community Hall

FRIDAY, MARCH 21st, 1930

Gents \$1.00

Ladies Free

Were you there?

Joseph Archer helped to draw up the Constitution for the Association. The lumber was to be obtained from the Wolfe Lake Lumber Co., northeast of La Grace. The framing was to be done with green lumber and the sheeting with dry lumber. Gaudins and Adams Brothers of Beaverlodge, Oakfords and Elliotts of Hythe donated the hardware for the hall. The Frontier Lumber Co., donated the building paper. The work began in the winter of 1929. Much of this work was done in 30°-40° below weather. The day they hauled the dry lumber it was 45° below. Mild or cold the women brought in a hot dinner. Louis Biesel headed up the building crew and did much work on his own. All the labor that went into the making of the hall was volunteer. H. Morgenstjerne donated the logs and Lester Hommy sawed them into lumber for the siding, ceiling and sheeting for the walls. The cull lumber and slabs were used to build a barn.

The opening dance was "The Opening Ball" March 21, 1930. The music cost \$35 and the admission was \$1.00 per couple. Mildred Biesel did the janitor work at \$1.00 a night. The flooring cost \$90 and each member donated 10 bushels of No. 2 wheat, worth 21¢ a bushel towards the payment. The board bought a piano but couldn't meet the payments so they asked the owner to take it back. In 1934 Gordon Hurley offered 10 acres of land on the Percy Lee quarter, to be cleared and broken to grow wheat to pay for another piano. The volunteer labor cleared it in one day and Bert Cunningham's outfit broke it in four days. That fall the price of wheat had gone up enough so that when the wheat was harvested they could afford a \$325 piano. It is still in the hall.

Prices for dance music ranged from \$35 on opening night to \$7.50 in the later thirties — sometimes the admission receipts were split 60% for the hall, 40% for the orchestra.

There were more than just dances. Axel Daniel, a Norwegian who lived beside the Riverside cemetery was a skilled wood carver and made a set of baseball darts for the hall. Dart tournaments were held. Bird Rose, 70 years old rode horseback from Hythe to participate and on one winter's night Cephas Gilmore brought a load from Hythe on the speeder.

The Literary Society met in the hall once a month, the Gimle and North Beaverlodge Christmas concerts, whist drives and box socials were also held there. Baby shows were held occasionally.



Rev. Moss of Hythe was the first minister to hold services. In the summer service was held in the hall and in winter in the homes. These services were well attended. The funerals of many of the old timers have been held in the hall which they helped to build and perpetuate. During the years the Sunday school was lead by Mr. Roseborough, Mr. Kring, Mrs. Eastman, Mrs. Cunningham, Mrs. Lorne Kerr. Grandma Kerr was very faithful in her attendance despite her advanced years. Walking was the mode of travel most of the time. About 1943 Mrs. Flo Byers organized a teen club called the Northern Lights who held their 'do's' in the hall. They started the Boxing Day dances which proved so successful for 20-25 years group, as all the young folks home for the Christmas holidays renewed friendships. It is sad when there was a meeting called a year ago to arrange for assistance from the government for the upkeep of Community halls nobody showed up. "How times change." The old saying is so right, "There is a time for everything."

### THE ALBRIGHT STORE

The first store in the Albright area was opened in the fall of 1928 by Andrew Johnson. It was situated on the east side of the highway — later it was moved south of the elevator. Over the years the store had many owners: A. R. Stevens, Eldon Thompson, Ken Eastman, Sr., Jim Pack and Len Jones. Len sold it to his nephew, George Wilkie who moved it in 1955 to the south end of the town of Beaverlodge where it was open for two or three years. Then it was closed and George moved away to the States.

### ED AND RETA BARRICK

Ed Barrick was born at Grenfell, Saskatchewan where his father had a large holding. Ed was only half interested in farming in spite of a two year Agricultural Course and his purchasing the Isaac Hill place north of Beaverlodge in 1926. He had been a member of the Aura Lee Sports Association in Toronto and thus was well trained in baseball and hockey. He along with George Anderson, Edwin John, Harry Davies and Herb Robertson spent considerable time playing semi-professional hockey and baseball for the Mountain Park Collieries at Luscar, — out of Edmonton.

Ed married Reta Nelson, sister of Clarence Nelson and they returned to Toronto about 1938 where he became an estate manager and private chauffeur to J. S. Atchinson, the owner of the Toronto Star. He also looked after the Atchinson's daughter's race horses.

Reta and Ed had two children. Dianne married Dr. Paul Jordan of Toronto and Raymond married Gail Flindall. Paul is with the Occupation forces in West Germany. The Barricks are now retired and living at Trenton. Ed was one of 11 children and there are now 100 Barricks.

### GEORGE BECK

George Beck was said to have been in on the Oklahoma Land Rush. He came to the Halcourt district before the land survey and squatted on school land. He was allowed to keep his land and the school land was zoned further south. He was a bachelor and a

neighbor of the Dorin Brothers. He left in 1914 after having an auction sale.

### LOUIS BEISEL

In the fall of 1927 Louis Beisel filed on a homestead in the Glass Lake area. He farmed this until about 1928, then felt the call of the north. In March 1928 he, his wife Annie and four children Alice, Laura, Muriel and Clifford started by train for Beaverlodge. Their oldest daughter Mildred stayed with her grandmother at Winterburn to finish her schooling. Chester Lowe met the family at the end of the steel in Wembley with horse and sleigh. Louis Beisel and a friend Louis Reese arrived a few days later with the stock and furniture.

The first home for the family was on what is now the Wright farm. The fall of 1928 Louis with help from some neighbors built a house on the farm south of Albright. Before deciding where to build Louis had a well drilled. This turned out to be a big attraction in the neighborhood. It was a flowing well with an abundance of pressure and nice soft water. Later it had to be tapped because it flooded the railway tacks.

The original house still stands. Gas and coal did not heat their home; they used wood cut from the forests near by.

Mrs. Annie Beisel was a very capable person. Besides managing her home and family she was called on to do a great deal of midwifery. She would be called any hour of night or day to assist a wee one into the world, including two of her grandchildren.

Life has a way of getting away and before long it was time to stir the nest. Mildred fell in love with a fine neighbor boy by the name of Vivian Pack. They were married in July 1935. This wedding was unique in that the groom had to borrow a suit and a wedding ring; the one he ordered was sitting in a mail car somewhere between Edmonton and Albright because of a washout. The wedding went on as planned, borrowed ring and all!

The home was beginning to adjust without Mildred when the next, Alice left for Vancouver to become the bride of Art Wurtz in 1939.

The war years followed; Clifford joined up with the armed forces and was there until the end of the war.

In March 1945 Mrs. Beisel in her fifties, passed away.



Louis and Annie Beisel and family, 1932.



The Louis Beisel Family, 1928. (L-R) Muriel, Laura, Clifford, Alice, Mildred.

Next in line to make her home elsewhere was the youngest daughter Muriel. She married Robert Ray in July 1947. After eight short years Muriel was left alone to raise three small children.

In 1954 Clifford married Helen Tolway, a nurse from Lymburn and about a year later, Laura was married to William Mitchell of Dimsdale.

Mr. Beisel passed away at the age of 79 in June, 1964.

Today the Louis Beisel buildings seem forlorn along the highway but nearby is the modern dairy layout of Helen and Clifford. They take an interest in farm organization and Cliff has played for many years in the Beaverlodge Band. The Beisels are one of the band families with Cliff and three children David, Barbara and Robert all playing.

#### **TOM BLACK**

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Black and daughters Lillian and Edith settled on their homestead in the North Beaverlodge district. They didn't stay in the country long. Tom was a tinsmith by trade. Times were hard and he asked a neighbour to canvas for the old pots and pans, and he would fix them; it would be a kind of partnership, but the neighbour didn't go for it.

The Blacks moved away in the early twenties.

#### **ANSON BRICKER — by Amy Bricker**

My husband, Anson S. Bricker was born in Washington, Ontario, and came with his brother to the west about 1900. They farmed in Saskatchewan, the brother at Cupar, Anson at Robsart, where he also had a service garage. In December 1922, Anson was married to Emma (Amy) MacLeay, who had taught the village school in Robsart in 1918.

After the dried-out years on the prairies, the Brickers decided to try their luck in the Peace River country. They arrived at Hythe, then the end of the steel on March 27, 1930. Anson, for a short time worked in a local garage, and Amy taught at the Goodfare, Annellen and North Beaverlodge schools. They moved to a homestead in the Windsor Creek district where Anson carried on farm operations, and Amy taught at Steeprock and again at Goodfare school.

In 1943 they moved to Dawson Creek, where Anson worked in the J. G. Wilson Planing Mill and Amy taught school.

Anson passed away in October 1959, after a linger-

ing illness. Amy still makes her home in Dawson Creek.



Anson and Amy Bricker at home in Dawson Creek, 1953.

#### **MELVIN BYERS — by Greta Schaffter**

I shall try to write a few of the things told to me by mum and dad — Flo and Mel Byers, about their life in this district. Dad was born in the Northwest Territories, now the Clover Bar district in the fall of 1902. His parents came from Ontario and were of Irish descent. Mum was born in the Ardressan district January, 1908 and her parents came there directly from England. They were married Christmas Day 1928 and dad boasts that he never forgets a wedding anniversary. In the spring of 1929 they purchased land in the Albright district where they made their home for 25 years. Mum tells of arriving in Beaverlodge after a three day trip from Edmonton, by way of Peace River. They stayed their first night at the Beaudet Hotel, now the Tartan Motors building, Mrs. Fletcher Smith also a bride, was also a guest at the hotel.

The first evening after checking into the hotel mum and dad walked out to their new home from Beaverlodge, a distance of three miles. Before mum would go into the house she had dad check the cellar as the house had once been a stopping house and had been closed up for a number of years. All was fine so the old house became their home. The first few years were hard years. The first crop sold for 25c a bushel, from seed purchased at \$1.00 a bushel. Dad remembers putting his car on wooden blocks as there was no money for gas during the depression.

We all remember many good times, ice-cream parties, competitions to see who could eat the most home-





Mel Buyers making a strike out.



Gretta and Wilbur Byers visiting Ralph and Eunice Cunningham.

made ice-cream. Ed Barrick could give dad a good run for his money. Mum took part in the plays put on during the war time. The money raised was used to send parcels to the men at war. The first piano in the Albright Hall was bought by a few men of the district who broke a 10 acre plot and seeded it to grain for a couple of years to raise the money.

Probably the first telephone in the district ran between the homes of Hurleys, Cunninghams, Barricks and Byers, but it ran along the barb wire fence. The only problem was that there was no way to ring your party, hence a white sheet was hung on the line indicating that you wanted to talk to your neighbor.

I know both mum and dad feel that although there were hard times, there were twice as many happy

times as the neighbors were the best. They were willing to give a hand when the need arose.

Mum played on the first softball team. Some of the players as she remembers were Rita Barrick, Vera and Gladys Chandler, Mary Nelson and Catherine Fair.

Dad was an active member of the Albright Hall board, played with the first Beaverlodge Band and was a member of the Hythe Masonic Lodge.

Mum and dad sold their land to Murray Lay and Walter Dyrkach and moved to Edmonton in the fall of 1952. Dad worked for Dale Construction until 1960. Mum worked for Simpsons-Sears for a number of years. Though they live in Edmonton, where they are retired, home will always be the farm at Albright. My brother Wilbur is an electrician in Edmonton. He has three children, Ronnie, Linda and David. Bill and I have two girls, Margaret and Jacquie at the University of Alberta.

Farming can be fun, if viewed in perspective. Think back to 1939, the year of the last grasshopper plague. Hand-spreading of poisoned bait was a slow affair so dad contrived a mechanical spreader and all the neighbors used it. Or recall when dad sold graded eggs to Adams Bros. store, all duly rubber-stamped certifying the producer and their freshness, at a small premium, of course, only to have a customer dress dad down on the street, claiming that the eggs were not fertile too. But passers-by our place, en route to Pouce Coupe, may still recall dad's venture in radish seed production. Regardless of the intention, the 20 acre field was indeed beautiful when in full bloom, but at harvest some fearful sounds emerged as dad proceeded with the mowing and the wind solved a lot more problems by piling up the crop in the nearby bush. Come to think of it, dad could have made political mileage out of an idea, just as William Aberhart had done. Just figure it out, 30 acres at 1000 pounds would put Mel Byer's radishes in every pot in Alberta.

#### FRED CHANDLER STORY

My mother and dad were both born in England. They were married over there and came out to Killarney, Manitoba. My sister Thelma, myself and sister Nellie were all born at Killarney. When I was about two years old we moved to Vancouver, B.C.

My dad and his friend operated a grocery store there for the next three years. As my parents couldn't see any future out there they decided to come to the Peace River country. There were now four of us children as my sister Vera was born in Vancouver. My dad came up to Beaverlodge in the spring of 1916 and filed on a homestead in the North Beaverlodge area. Our mother and we four children came by train to Grande Prairie later in the spring. Dad and Mr. Hurley came to meet us at the train with a team and wagon.

We lived in a tent for that first summer while dad was building our log house. As we didn't bring any furniture with us dad had to make a table, chairs or benches and beds out of poles. I can remember the wind blowing at times and whipping at our tent.

In the summertime our mother and a neighbor lady used to take their clothes down to a creek and wash



Four generations of Chandlers. Jack, Fred, Jeanette (Chandler) Twiner and children Wanda, Roxanne and Darcie — 1971.

down there. Of course this could only be done on nice days as they wanted the clothes to dry before we came home again.

When I was about seven years old I got sick and had to go to the hospital in Grande Prairie. I was down there in the hospital for three weeks. It was in the winter time and dad had to take me with a horse and cutter. When I came back home from the hospital I got a ride up to Beaverlodge with the mail man. He drove a pair of mules and we left Grande Prairie early in the morning and didn't get to Beaverlodge until late at night. My mother and a neighbor lady came and got me that same night.

There wasn't any school when we first came to the North Beaverlodge area to live, I think I was about eight years old when a school was finally built and so we were able to attend. Nellie Robson was our first teacher. The school was built out of lumber; all the other schools in the district were made of logs. Some of the first pupils who attended school were Delmar, Evelyn and Dorothy Hawthorne; Arvid, Everett, Carl and Signe Wedell; Thelma, Fred and Nellie Chandler; Lloyd, Sherwood and Bob Pack; Hazel and Raymond Hurley. These last two pupils were the children of Guy Hurley, a brother of Gordon Hurley. Some of the teachers names I remember were Miss Walper, Mr. Keeping, Mr. Judd Perry. My sister and I did the janitor work for a number of years. In later years some of the teachers boarded at our place.

Dad had to go away to work during the winter. He usually went to southern B.C. and got work in a lumber camp. He always managed to get home for Christmas and would go back to work again after the New Year. One winter I'll always remember as it was so cold he didn't go back to work. Of course, we ran short of money and supplies so we had to eat potatoes for two weeks steady. We didn't even have any salt or butter to put on them.

My sister Gladys was born after we moved to the homestead. Sometimes during the summer months our mother took a job. She worked for Mrs. Elias Smith up in the old town of Beaverlodge. She also worked for the Sampson Brothers who owned a store. Dad would stay on the homestead with my sisters and me and would

try to get some clearing done on our homestead. It was a long hard struggle in those days as all the trees had to be cut with an axe and the stumps all grubbed out too. Our mother passed away after a lengthy illness in 1934.

As soon as my sisters and I were old enough, we went out to work for a farmer at harvest time. There used to be bumper crops in those days so there was always lots of stooking to be done. I was only 15 years and was expected to keep up with grown men who had been stooking for years.

When I was 17 years old I filed on a homestead not too far from Bush Lake. I proved it up and sold it in later years. It has changed hands three or four times since then and the last owner was Ted McLean.

I, Fred married Irene Jones. We have lived on a farm six and one half miles west of Hythe for the past 33 years. We have two children, our daughter Jeanette is married and lives in Kelowna, B.C. with her husband Ted and three little girls. Our son Bert is a heavy duty mechanic and works for Pearsons Construction in Hythe. He is still single and lives with us on the farm.

I have seen a great many changes in this country since we arrived here in 1916. I would not want to go through those early days again.

#### JACK CHANDLER STORY

My friend and I left Liverpool, England to come to Canada on the S.S. Victorian in the spring of 1906. We arrived at St. Johns, New Brunswick nine days after leaving Liverpool. It was a very rough voyage, the waves sometimes going over the ship's smoke stacks. From St. Johns we went to Winnipeg and got a job on a farm at Killarney, Manitoba at ten dollars a month. I liked farm work and hired for a year, but my friend after working for a month quit and went to work on the railroad.

I worked around Killarney for nearly seven years. I'll never forget the winter of 1906 and 1907. It was the worst they had seen for many years; the snow was so deep it was difficult for the trains to get through. There was a shortage of coal and some farmers had to burn up some of their furniture to keep warm. Thousands of horses and cattle starved to death. The folks I was working for were afraid of the house catching fire so never had a fire going at night and the weather outside was between 50 degrees and 60 degrees below zero. I grew a beard that winter and several times while I was lighting the fire in the morning my mustache and beard froze together. Late in the fall of 1907, I took a trip back to England to marry Ellen Jane Dutfield of Greenwich, borough of London. We came back to Killarney to work for the couple I had been working for last. There our three children were born.

In the spring of 1912, leaving my wife in Killarney, I went to Lockwood, Saskatchewan to work on a well drilling outfit. From there we went to Vancouver as my friend had bought a store there. He had written and asked me to go and work with him as we had worked in the same kind of business in the Old Country. After a while he bought another store in Vancouver and left me to manage the first one. I wrote my wife to sell the home in Killarney and come to Vancouver.





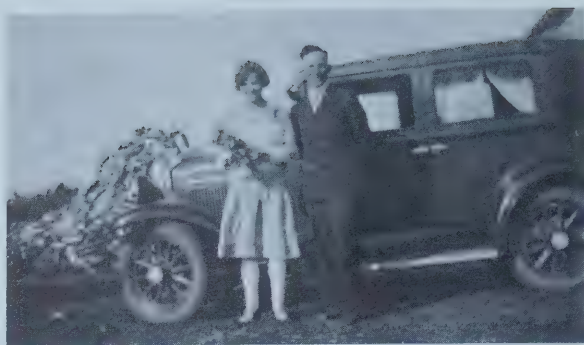
In the sleigh are Louis Beisel, Ven Hodges and Jack Chandler. Others are Thelma Chandler, Mrs. Jack Chandler, Lucy Hodges, Lena Lowe and baby Ruth, Violet McMaster, Chester Lowe and son Allen 1928.

When they arrived we got another home together. One evening I had heard of a meeting where a preacher was to speak on the Peace River country so I went down to listen. I remember him speaking about a big hill, Richmond Hill far from the village of Grande Prairie and saying if you climbed to the top you could count about 15 lakes. It seemed to be a good country for farming or homesteading. I made up my mind right there that I was going to get a homestead somewhere in the Grande Prairie district so again I left the wife and family in Vancouver in the spring of 1916, to try the Peace.

I arrived by train from Vancouver to Spirit River, that place being the end of the railroad at that time and under construction. From there to Grande Prairie I travelled by the stage, being a team and sleigh which also carried the mail. Grande Prairie was just a village but settlers were coming in all the time. I was able to get a ride as far as Lake Saskatoon with I. E. Gaudin of Beaverlodge, who had hired a team and sleigh to take him home. I then got to Marvin Stewart's place, a man whom I knew and who lived close to where Wembley is now.

I heard that there were homesteads to be had at Beaverlodge, so the next day I walked to Beaverlodge. I stayed over night at Elias Smith's stopping place in Beaverlodge and inquired at Mr. Gaudin's general store where I might get a homestead. I was told of two brothers by the name of Newgard, Doug and Harry, who would be glad to show me around the country.

Eventually I filed on a quarter section northwest of their land on S.E. 33-72-10-W6. From the Newgard brothers I bought a set of logs which were already cut and piled and they hauled them with a team of oxen to the site where I intended to build. I then hired a Finlander named Mat Kauppie to help me build the house. Harry Newgard and I each rented a team of oxen and wagons to go to Buffalo Lakes sawmill to buy lumber for roof and floor. I was lucky enough to buy jack pine shingles. The trip for the lumber took us nearly a week there and back. We had a grub box along and bed roll so made camp every night mostly in the bush. We cut spruce boughs for a bed and put the bed roll on top. It was quite cold at night to take off a fur coat and other clothes down to one's underwear and get between those Hudson Bay blankets. We were soon



Chester and Thelma Lowe's wedding day, July 7, 1929.

nice and warm. We took along some feed for the oxen but had to buy further requirements along the way.

When the house was built I made two beds of spruce poles and rough lumber table and chairs of a sort. I received a letter from my wife and family to say they were coming along with the Wilfred Agnews who were also going to homestead. I got a neighbor, Gordon Hurley to break an acre of land for a garden and I worked on the homestead until it was harvest time. Then Tommy Black and Mac McLean and I went to Saskatchewan to work at harvesting (threshing), around Outlook. I came back to the homestead late in the fall and during the winter worked for Jean Richards getting barn logs and fence posts out of the bush several miles away. When spring came I went to southern Alberta to do farm work until late in the fall, then came back home. I had to work out on and off to get enough land broken to fulfill the homestead duties.

It was five years before I could get the title for my homestead and it was nearly eight years before I could save enough money to buy my first team of work horses. In the meantime I had traded a good stock saddle for a small pony for my boy to ride and bought a little larger mare with which to do odd jobs. In time that little mare raised some good work horses. As time went on I was able to get more land broken and in crop and also buy farm machinery enough to work the farm. But we had our ups and downs. It was a long way from being all sunshine to raise a family on a homestead. We all had good health except for one or two occasions. Sometimes the cupboard got pretty low on food but while we could grow potatoes and get wild rabbits we never went hungry. In those "dirty thirties" things were really tough. I had to sell good number two wheat, a 65 bushel wagon box full for \$12 a load, couldn't sell eggs or butter and got next to nothing for a five gallon can of cream. I had three good sows but couldn't sell them or keep them as the crop was very poor, so had to shoot two of them and burn them. A lot of farmers that had cows, killed the calves soon after they were born as it didn't pay to raise them.

As the years went by times got better but it was quite a number of years before the railroad reached Beaverlodge. I can still remember the times when I hauled grain all the way to Grande Prairie in the winter with team and sleighs, about 35 miles and later

on to Wembley and then to Beaverlodge, then still later to Albright.

I stayed on the farm until I was 72 years old, then sold it and moved to Beaverlodge, bought a lot and built a house. We sold our house and in 1973 moved into the Senior Citizens' Apartments in Beaverlodge.

I still think a farm is a good place to live and a good place to raise a family.

There were six children. Fred married Irene Jones and lives in the Goodfare district. Thelma married Chester Lowe and after living in the Albright district for a few years, moved to Vegreville. Nellie married Harold Green from Hythe and moved to New Westminster. These children were born in Killarney.

Vera was born in Vancouver. She married Allan Eastman, who was killed in World War II, and now lives in Langley, B.C.

Two were born at Albright. Gladys married Calvin Kyle, who died in 1951. Then she married Bill Boyd, east of Grande Prairie and a councillor of Grande Prairie County No. 1. Grace married Ewald Brokak and lives in Vermilion.

Mrs. Chandler died in 1934.

In February, 1972, the further statistics are: 17 grandchildren and 43 great-grandchildren.

In 1942 Jack remarried to Eveline Chandler, no relation, born near Charlottetown, P.E.I. and later living at Port Arthur.

#### **BERT AND ESTHER CUNNINGHAM — by Esther Cunningham**

We arrived at our first home in the North Beaverlodge school district April 10, 1927, one month after being married in Vegreville, Alberta. We came to the Jergen Johnson farm that my brother, Chester Lowe had rented the previous fall.

We picked this district because my two brothers, Maurice and Chester had come up here the fall of 1926 to look the country over. They stopped in at a threshing outfit on Fred Pack's place and here Maurice met one of his army pals, Percy Stephens, so they decided to locate near him.

Bert came up in January to look for a place for us to start life together and had rented the Percy Stephen's homestead, just south of the school. It had 40 acres broken, log walls for a barn, and an 18' x 24' log granary. We put a shingled roof on the granary in the spring of 1928 and moved in for "just a year or two",



Bert Cunningham showing his buggy to Alcmena Bolton, Bert's cousin and the teacher at Gimle school. 1928.



Bert Cunningham hauling water from Fred Pack's well in 1928.

which stretched into 30 years, with an addition added in 1932.

Edwin, Bert's brother, had come in with our two carloads of settler's effects. Our household furniture consisted of 6 new chairs, a new range and two beds from our homes and wedding gifts. Bert made a kitchen table and some cupboards. Edwin met us at Wembley, the end of steel, after our 24-hour rough and rolling trip on the ED and BC. We stayed in the Jergen Johnson rooming house that night — grey flannel sheets and pork and beans for supper. At that time two neighbourhood boys, Bob Connolly and Bob Harkness who were with us, thought that this was a terribly crude way to live. They worked in the district for a year or two before returning home.

Bert and Edwin being horse lovers, brought in 19 head. Dick and Dinah, a driving team of well marked bays with roached manes, were our pride and joy. The boys had bought a new buggy just before we left Vegreville.

We met Chris Sylvester and Chester Hartman that spring in horse-trading deals, also Hugh Thompson, who was one of our nearest neighbours, just across the river where the Gudlaugsons now live. Jens Anderson lived south of us for a few months before moving to the Gimle district. The Morganstjerne family moved into Jergen Johnson's place that fall.

That first summer we went to the Beaverlodge sports on May 24 and to Rio Grande where Bert played ball with the Gimle team on July 1. I went to Ladies' Aid at Grandma Hommy's with Mrs. Anderson, where I met several neighboring women. Mrs. Robson thought I was one of the school children from Gimle.

We went back to Vegreville in October and stayed until February as Bert helped thresh until Christmas.

In the spring of 1928, March 20 to be exact, we moved from the Johnson place to our own with hardly enough snow for sleighing. Living so close to school we boarded several of the teachers. In June of 1936 when we brought our baby daughter Eunice home, Ralph, our eldest son, brought all the school children in to see her.

Chester married Thelma Chandler in 1929. They homesteaded west of Hythe until he joined the services in 1940. While he was away Thelma moved to Vegreville where they farmed for a time, then they moved into Vegreville on account of his failing sight.



My brother, Joe Lowe came to live with us in 1928 at the age of nine years and lived with us until 1954 when he married Audrey Sutherland. My dad, J. P. Lowe lived with us for most of the time until he passed away in January 1948.

We had four children. Ralph was born in Grande Prairie on October 27, 1929. He married Margaret Currey of North Edmonton in 1958. They have one boy Bobby and 2 girls, Jill and Janet. They live at Ardrossan where Marg is postmistress. Ralph has worked for Chem-cell for 19 years. Eugene was born in Grande Prairie in 1932 and was one of the first class at Fairview Agriculture School. He married Shirley Mill of Hythe in 1954. They have one girl Debby and one boy Raymond. He farms the old Gordon Hurley place. Eunice was born in Grande Prairie in 1936 and finished her high school there. She married Harvey P. Gifford from the U.S.A. Base and has lived in the States ever since, except for 2 years when Harvey was posted to Japan. They have 5 children, Ricky, Robby, Jody, Sheree and Cathy. David, our youngest was born in Beaverlodge in 1946 and was a Fairview Agriculture College student in 1965 and 1966. He drives a school bus and farms the home place.

Now that we are retired we cannot bring ourselves to leave. If we had to do it over again I'm sure we would make the same choice as life has been good to us here, and where could you find a more beautiful country or a better district?

Our memories go back to all the good neighbors we've had in the district.

#### **MR. AND MRS. ALEX DEVITT AND MISS TAYLOR**

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Devitt and Miss Taylor, Mrs. Devitt's sister came from Vancouver and filed on land that later became known as North Beaverlodge school district. Basil Peace owns the land now.

Neither one of them had ever lived on a farm before. It was not easy going, Mrs. Devitt was a stenographer and Alex a telegrapher by trade.

The Devitts had been married several years before they came to the Peace River country. While they lived here a baby boy was born to them. They named him Elmer. They never had any more children.

In later years when Frank Thompson of Albright was in Toronto attending "The Lorne Green Radio School" for speech, Elmer Devitt was there also taking the same course. Frank met Mrs. Devitt and found she still thought of the Peace River country as remote and primitive. She was unable to grasp the fact that the country had progressed so much.

Miss Taylor passed away while Devitts were living here. She is buried in the Beaverlodge cemetery. Alex died many years ago in the East.

#### **THE FRANK DICKS**

Frank Dick, his mother and step-father, Mayer Rich came by rail from Southern Alberta in 1920. They brought with them personal effects, livestock and machinery. They filed on quarters four miles north and west of Beaverlodge — where they cut and hauled logs to erect the buildings on Frank's quarter. The buildings still stand.

At that time there was no bridge over the

Beaverlodge river west of Beaverlodge. In the winter of 1921 Frank, Rede and Bob Stone agreed to cut and haul the timbers for a bridge if the government would build it. The snow was so deep for the eight teams that it was necessary to change the lead teams frequently for trail breaking.

Gertie Stephens came from England in 1920, in the company of her mother, sisters Lucy and Edith and brother Ernie. Frank and Gertie were married in 1926. They have four children — Allan, Dennis, Garry and Genevieve. For a period of five years, Gertie's brother and his children, Charlie, Annie, Percy and Gertie Stephens spent much of their time at the Dicks when their mother was seriously ill in the early 1930's.

In the late 1940's, Frank purchased the Robert Stone place, on the river just west of Beaverlodge, where he operated a gravel business until 1972.

Allan married Jean Ingleson, a nurse from Yorkshire, England. Jean was matron of the Beaverlodge Hospital. They now live at Brooks, Alberta where Allan has a trucking business. They have two children, Graham and Sally Jean.

Allan, Alan Kerr and Walter Kerr Senior took an adventuresome journey in 1952. They back packed and walked through the Monkman Pass to Sinclair Mills near Hansard. It was a difficult trip but a rewarding two weeks.

Dennis married Doreen Shobert of Doe River, B.C. They have a window glass works business in Houston, B.C. Dennis is a builder and worked on many projects around Beaverlodge and Dawson Creek before settling in Houston. They have two children, Sandra and Melanie.

Garry married Connie Fair of Hythe. They have one son Tyler and live in Beaverlodge. Garry worked with his father in the gravel business. Connie worked at the Treasury Branch.

Genevieve attended Beaverlodge High School and took nurse's training in the Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary for her R.N. She worked for a time in the Beaverlodge and Hythe Hospitals and is now assistant matron at the Brooks Municipal Hospital, Brooks, Alberta.

Gertie taught Sunday school at St. Luke's Anglican Church in Beaverlodge for eight years, and has been active in church and community affairs. She obtained her medallion for the St. John's Ambulance course and has put her knowledge to good use on many occasions. She is well known for her sewing and handicraft work.

Frank and Gertie retired to their home in Beaverlodge in 1973.

The community doesn't forget the hospitality of the Dicks when they welcomed swimmers to the Beaverlodge river at their back door. Gertie's reprimand was light to the hungry swimmers who raided the carrots and peas in the fine Dick garden.

There has always been laughter and good humor in the Dick home.

#### **THE DOCHERTY STORY**

Mr. and Mrs. Docherty and son Robert came from Oklahoma about 1915 and settled on the present Clifford Biesel place. Robert attended the Happy Valley

school. They put up a nice one-room house but it remained unfinished as it did not have a floor. Later they built a larger frame house but it too was never finished. They were considered good neighbors but some thought that Docherty was hard to live with.

In the spring of 1919 Docherty disappeared without any explanation or seeming reason. Sam Drosyck, a neighbor was accused of murder, according to gossip, possibly as a screen to avert attention.

Shortly afterwards one of the hired men of the community played court to Widow Docherty and eventually it was approaching a proposal of marriage, it seemed but the suitor must have some proof that Docherty was indeed dead.

"Oh, he's down cellar under a pile of turnips and lime. The old buzzard just won't rot!"

Things had reached a climax. The suitor was no other than Corporal McLean, R.N.W.M.P. Doc Wainwright came from Lake Saskatoon to pick up the body, assisted by Clarence Lossing. Mrs. Docherty was sentenced to life imprisonment and at one time escaped from Kingston Penitentiary. The son was sent to relatives in the United States. And, as might be expected, the pulp magazines wrote up the story and for years afterwards you might see it written up in "True Detective."

#### **WALTER DYRKACH**

Walter Jack Dyrkach was born on March 23, 1911 to Polish immigrant parents, Michael and Anne Dyrkach in the small town of Sifton, Manitoba. His parents died in 1923 when he was 12 years old and from then he stayed with various relatives until he was 16 when he set out to make his own way. He knew nothing of farming so when a farmer asked him if he could plow he said, "Oh sure I can." He worked two years in Manitoba before setting out west in a box car.

He arrived in Beaverlodge just in time to celebrate his 18th birthday. This was in 1929 and he went to work for the Stubbs Brothers, where he worked for four years and in 1934 he married the farmer's daughter, Miss Dora Stubbs. Dora and Walter lived on and rented the Reg Baird land for nine years and finally bought the George Pack place where they still live.

Walter was always a hard worker and often would rise with the sun to clear his land. Then around 7:00 a.m. he would walk to town to work as a mechanic at Ron Morris' garage, then walk home to clear more land until dark. Now he farms in partnership with sons Jim and Bill.

Walter and Dora have been active in the Beaverlodge Alliance Church for the last 39 years. In January 1974 they celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. They raised a family of six children. First was Mary Ann who is now married to William Jones. They have three children and own the Arnold Burgess farm in Two Rivers. Jim was next and he is now in partnership with Walter on the farm. Jim married Maxine Cage and with two girls live on the Jack Hamel farm in the Albright area. Jim also played hockey with the Hythe Mustangs for 12 years and has played fast-ball for the Beaverlodge Blues as did brother Bill. Bill married Faye Cage and with their two boys they live in Grande Prairie where Bill works for Grimshaw Truck-

ing as well as being in partnership with Walter.

Margaret married Glenn Herron and lives in the north, Rainbow Lake, where Glenn is employed as a steam engineer with Aquataine of Canada.

Brian has just received his degree in Education from the University of Alberta and is also an accomplished musician. Brian will be teaching in Spruce Grove this next term. He is single.

Rose is the last one and is living at home and taking her grade nine in Hythe.

#### **JIM EASTMAN STORY**

I joined the South Alberta Regiment in 1940. After basic training in Edmonton we went to Dundurn, Nanaimo, Niagara-On-The-Lake and Debert, Nova Scotia, then overseas to France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. I was driving Major Currie's tank in St. Lambert Sur Dives when he won the Victoria Cross.

I married Ivy Bone, a Hythe girl. Together we have farmed in the Albright area. We had some hard times, working out winters for nine consecutive years to supplement the farm. We bought our first Holsteins in 1957 hoping to be able to stay home winters as the children, Joyce and Kenny were both in school and we hated leaving them each winter. We have been home ever since as that was the start of our now successful dairy enterprise.

Joyce and Kenny took an interest in dairying and belonged to the 4-H Dairy Club for five years. Ivy was a 4-H leader of the club for three years.

They have many trophies and ribbons from their prize cattle. One of Kenny's 4-H calves was in our herd for ten years winning first prize in every class she was entered in at the County Fair at Grande Prairie for many years, she was the proud mother of six sets of twins in six years, nine heifers and three bulls. We had the misfortune of losing her last year.

Joyce married Richard Webster and they have two children, Leona and Alan. They have a small farm at Abbotsford, B.C.

Ken married a local girl, Dianne Leonard and they have three children, Dean, Darren, and Sheri. They are living on the home place. Ken and I have formed a partnership in the dairy business.

#### **THE KEN EASTMAN STORY**

Ken Eastman was born in Cornwall, Ontario. As a young man he worked in lumber camps in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Later he operated a farm machinery agency in Denholm, Saskatchewan where he met and married Elizabeth Hogg in 1914. He moved from there to Arrow Lakes and Ladner, B.C. working at various jobs before coming to the Albright district in 1927 with four children — Allan, Marguerite, Jim and Jean. Douglas was born here in 1930.

Ken bought a quarter of land from Mrs. Julia (Granny) Stevens and built a log house 16' x 20'. He had the gift of witching wells and had John Ozust drill one for him. He got a flowing well, which ran the year round making mounds of ice around it in the winter.

The depression followed close on the heels of their arrival and not being able to keep up the land payments, Ken rented the land and the quarter east from Mr. Bennett, this being the old Guy Hurley



homestead where Frank Gurney had been living. The Bennett place had a two storey frame house on it so the family moved in giving them more room. This proved to be a really cold place. They added a granary to one side for a kitchen, banking it with sods. One Christmas it was 10 degrees below in the kitchen. The old airtight heater was red hot often through the winter.

They were in the North Beaverlodge school district and the children walked across the fields and jumped the creek to attend the one room school being taught by Kathleen Robson. In winter they drove with team and sleigh over drifted roads that had never seen a snow plow. The highlight of the school years was the Christmas concert with gifts and candy bags and a program put on by teacher and children, who had worked hard for weeks before presenting their efforts.

The early Christmases were spent with the Russell Wrights, John Irvin and Bob Peters families. None of them having relatives in this country, they took turns entertaining for Christmas and New Year's.

The long winter evenings were spent at home playing games or reading books of which we had plenty, or with good radio programs such as the Lux Theatre, Fibber Magee and Mollie, Jack Benny and the Happy Gang.

In 1929 dad helped canvas for money to build the Albright Hall, all of the material and labour being donated. "The Literary" was a popular event in the new hall with all local talent and no admission charge. Dad took his turn on the hall board helping with the dances, which were attended by young and old. Mom was superintendent of the Sunday School and active in the church work, which was also held in the hall.

In 1938 dad decided to homestead farther north, moving to the Deadwood area. In 1940 they came back to Albright and bought the store from Eldon Thomson. Together mother and dad ran the post office and store for five years. Dad also ran the elevator at Albright for a time.

They sold the store to Jim Pack in 1945 and moved to White Rock where they lived until they passed away, mother in October, 1960 and dad in April, 1961 at the age of 76.

Dad was a true pioneer and a bit of a wanderer. He built 11 different houses for his family in his life time.

Allan married Vera Chandler in 1937. He farmed in summers and worked in lumber camps in the winter until he joined the Calgary Highlanders in 1941. He was killed August 8, 1944 at the age of 29 years, in the battle of Falaise, South of Caen, France by the explosion of an 88 millimetre shell while leading his platoon. He was mentioned in dispatches for bravery under enemy fire July 27, 1944. He is buried at Brettville-Sur-Laize Canadian Military cemetery in France. They had two sons, Richard Arling and Martin Allan. After his death Vera lived in White Rock for many years. Arling has made the Air Force his career, is married and has three children. They live at Barrie, Ontario. Martin spent some time in the navy and is now a heavy duty welder. He lives at Quesnel, B.C. with his wife and two little girls.

Marguerite married Lawrence Thompson in 1940.

The Thompsons farmed in the Gimle district until 1954 when they moved to Dimsdale area and have farmed there ever since. Lawrence drives the school bus. They have four children. Neil with the meteorology department of the Department of Transport, presently in Grande Prairie. He is married and has two boys. Dave is in drywall construction in Grande Prairie. He married Karen Hanson from Goodfare and they have two children. Iris is working in Red Deer and Diane is at home.

Jean took her high school in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. She worked as a telephone operator in Dawson Creek during the war. It was Jean that turned in the alarm at the time of the big fire in Dawson Creek in Alaska Highway days. She moved to Vancouver after the war and married Jack Haines where they lived in White Rock, B.C. and had a family of three girls and a boy. Last year they retired and moved to Langley where Jean operates a book store with a friend.

Douglas moved to White Rock with the folks in 1946 where he finished his schooling and joined the air force. There he spent five years as an aircraft electrician and two years as an instructor of electronics. He married Shirley Saunders and they have a family of six. Doug had his own electrical shop in Langley specializing in refrigeration, until he retired because of ill health. He now operates a shoe repair shop in Langley, B.C.

#### **FRANCIS FLETCHER**

Francis (Chubb) Fletcher is the son of that well-known pioneer Frank Fletcher, otherwise known as "Happy Fletcher". Chubb was born near Hythe and in time ran the home farm. Then he moved to Albright and from there to Grande Prairie where he works for Tissington Construction as a talented cabinet maker. You'll find his beautiful cabinets in new display homes in Grande Prairie. In leisure time he makes beautiful home furniture as bedsteads and accompanying pieces.

He married Mary Wright of Albright, an ardent community worker, particularly in C.G.I.T. and church circles.

Their three children attended Beaverlodge schools. Roberta took teacher training and is now teaching. She is married to Sylva Brulotte of Girouxville, now of Grande Prairie. Warren, after high school took special mechanics training in Grande Prairie. He married Linda Lillico of Spirit River, who works in the bank in Beaverlodge. They live in Beaverlodge. The youngest, Terry, is completing school in Grande Prairie and is at home.

#### **FRANK C. FLETCHER**

Frank Charles Fletcher spent four years as a foreman in the British Navy and served with distinction in the Boxer Rebellion in China. He was born in Dover, Kent County, England and came to Brandon in 1904, to Jensen, Saskatchewan in 1905. He came on to the Peace in 1911 with his cousins, Owen Gulshan and Richard Jones, spending the first week of May to August 22 on the trail from Edson to Grande Prairie. He married Mrs. E. R. Boston of Brandon, originally from London, England.

He was known by all as "Happy" Fletcher. His neighbors on the homestead might say that he was never happy unless he was miserable, thereby somewhat the prototype of "Old Bill" in Bruce Bairnsfather's cartoons of World War I. The better story is that when he was in Jensen, he clerked in a store for a time and invariably greeted his customers with a light-hearted "Hi." Regardless he was a friend of all, friendship based on frontier need. Whether there was a steam engine to run or a wagon tire to re-set, Happy Fletcher was the man to call. On the Edson Trail there was no shortage of fresh butter in camp if cream could be obtained. In the morning the pail was slung beneath the reach and the rough trail would do the rest!

He remarked repeatedly that the Depression need not worry a real pioneer. After using oxen for 11 years, he was convinced that those who did likewise would keep out of debt and prosper.

Happy Fletcher served on the board of the Happy Valley School, named after him, for six years and later was chairman of the Glass Lake school district. It is recorded elsewhere that when the railroad came to Hythe, Happy Fletcher and Kelly Sunderman shared the honor of driving the golden spike.

#### COBB W. FRANCIS

Mr. and Mrs. Cobb Francis filed on land on the banks of the Beaverlodge river across from Hans Hommy's place. Clifford Beisel owns that land now. They had one daughter, Betty. In 1920 Mr. Francis died and was buried in the Beaverlodge cemetery. Mrs. Francis remarried and left shortly after that to go to the United States.

#### THE LEONARD FUGILL STORY

Victoria was Queen in 1892 and that is when I was born in Hull, Yorkshire, England. It was a seaport city. Whaling ships brought in huge whales besides all the world shipping. There was no electricity, no movies, no cars, no radio. I came to Saskatchewan in 1911. I worked on the farms and in a hardware store. In 1914 after threshing was done, the four of us who had come from Hull went together to Moose Jaw to enlist. Three were taken. I was left because of eyesight. After their departure I went south of Swift Current and took up a homestead and pre-emption on the Montana border. I built a nice little house and put in one winter residence and then went to work on nearby farms. Going back in the fall to put in the second winter I found my lovely little house had been plundered. Should I go to the police and make a fuss or go to the Peace River country, which was being boosted? So in 1917 I walked west from Grande Prairie to the Beaverlodge river. I rode out with Lee Borden and had lists of open quarters. About noon, Lee said, "Let's go over to the ranch and get a feed of moose meat." "Oh, I'd like to taste moose meat." Didn't you know you had moose meat for breakfast and supper last night? It tasted like beef.

I worked in the lumber camp and for Billy Salmon in his hotel in Grande Prairie that winter, then I was drafted into the army where I was placed in the Medical Office, processing the First Depot Battalion

through inoculations, vaccinations, sicknesses and burns. The barracks had these huge potbellied stoves converted to gas and it was not unusual for some country boy to come in from an evening leave, only to be brought to the hospital by the ambulance, because he had tried to light the stove with a match.

I went to England in 1923 and met Clara Larrard and we were married and spent our honeymoon on the Atlantic Ocean. We went to friends in Saskatchewan and soon came back to the homestead. Once when we came to the homestead we found a fire burning in the soil, which I put out with a shovel. We moved into the little log cabin and I put a floor in it. Then came the work of making a farm. I cut logs and built log buildings including a new log house.

I got interested in the rapid changes taking place since Queen Victoria's time. My dad told me the Bible told many things about this earth. So I found much knowledge and I sought out others who were interested in Bible prophecy.

In 1940 a ban was put on such visiting but I still continued seeing people and so I had to serve time in Fort Saskatchewan Jail. When I got home my neighbours had some of my harvesting done but it was a very rainy time. The land was soft I could not pull the binder so I got no crop. This was an emergency! No feed, no money. I received an offer to go to Lake Saskatoon and winter my stock there. In the spring I rented the Otto Hendrickson farm just north of Beaverlodge and bought Peter's homestead to live in as it had good buildings. This was wonderful lake shore pasture. I let the homestead go as the mortgage had become top-heavy during the depression. I grew potatoes, logged the lumber off the land, kept the pound (by request), farmed Otto's land and cleared some more land.

The trumpeter swans nested on the lake. I saw all kinds of animals and birds including a silver fox. The deer came near the house, a peregrine falcon perched on the arbor outside the window. One day Clara and I saw three Whooping Cranes fly past. Later that week they were also seen on the farm of Olaf Steinbru and they stayed for several days. I phoned Bernard Hamm but unfortunately he was too late to see them. We used to see huge flocks of Whistling Swans like a great white cloud floating over, also long lines of Sand Hill Cranes kraaking along in the fall.

Clara died peacefully in her sleep October 21, 1971 in the Beaverlodge hospital.

#### JOHN AND AGATHA GOSSEN

John Gossen brought his wife and daughters to Goodfare in 1929. The parents moved to Beaverlodge in 1944.

John and Agatha were born in South Russia though many hundreds of miles apart. Agatha, the eldest of Agatha and Nickoli Wiebe's 18 children (only 10 of which lived) was born in 1889. Her father was a "bone" doctor. John's mother was our equivalent to a public health nurse. Mrs. Gossen told us how his mother delivered all the babies for the five surrounding villages because there was no doctor for that area. As a child and as a growing girl, Agatha had constant care of younger children. So exasperated did she



become that she told her mother, "Never will I have so many kids as you have!"

One memorable March day her father came home with train tickets for the whole family and demanded that they pack up all the household effects, their clothes, bedding, children, farm equipment — everything — and be ready to move to Siberia in three days. When we asked the reason for the move Agatha said bluntly, "Silly notion." Agatha and her mother were washing clothes when father delivered his bombshell. Without finishing the washing, just wringing it out to dry, they began their monumental task. Father hadn't been well and so was of little help but somehow they managed. Their household goods, the horses and sleighs had to go with hired help on the freight train, while the family went on the passenger train. Agatha came down with typhus on the train and became delirious and didn't know what went on after they boarded the train. At the last village before reaching Siberia, the father, Nickoli Wiebe died and the Gossens took the family to their home — nine Wiebes and three Gossens in two small rooms — an unlikely place for a sick girl to get better. But get better she did and went on to Siberia.

Since Agatha was the eldest of the family a lot of responsibility rested on her shoulders. John and his father helped Wiebes build a house. Though it may seem strange to us — to her it was a castle. They plowed sods and piled them like bricks for the walls. Agatha put a rough coat of straw and mud plaster over the sods. On top of this went a finer plaster and finally a third coat which she sanded and whitewashed. All the plaster she used had to be tramped and carried and lifted. Inside the house they built partitions of clay bricks that they made themselves. The "oven" was eight feet long, made of the clay bricks with three openings — one into each of the three rooms to heat the house. There was no heat in the livingroom. On the end of the house they built the barn. On the end of the barn was the shed for the hay and tools. When it came time for the windows she went to Henry Fry, a neighbor and asked for \$5.00 worth of glass. He refused her so she hitched up the horse and drove to her uncle's. He gave her the money and they had a "fine house."

Agatha became sick after finishing the house so her mother, fearing she wouldn't be strong enough for outside work again said Agatha must become a "Tailor of men's clothes." So she took lessons from John's Aunt Schroeder and learned her trade well.

Now Henry Fry wanted to marry Agatha's mother and bring his family to live in the new house. Three times he asked and three times daughter Agatha said, "No!" "You can't have her." In the meantime John Gossen came and asked Agatha to marry him. The answer was "No! I cannot leave my mother alone!" Then she began to think, "If mother married Fry he could look after the cows and pigs and kids. Then I could marry John. So she told Fry, "If you make a wedding like I want it you can have her, and be married before the New Year." So it came about that when John asked Agatha again her answer was "yes" and they were married January 11, 1911.

Agatha went to live with his folks. Little did she

know her mother-in-law's harsh ways — though she was paid for her nursing services she spent little for food. Agatha longed for the food of her mother's table where there was five fresh loaves of bread everyday and plenty of meat — even if there were usually 20 around the table for each meal. Neither had she expected that she'd have to work in the fields and put up hay, especially when she learned she was going to have a baby.

When Annie was born in 1912 she only weighed 3 pounds and Agatha despaired of raising her at all. John was more optimistic, "You wait and see! They grow up," he said.

In 1914 John and Agatha moved to Somsok because of the revolution. There for three years John looked after the soldiers' horses and Agatha sewed for them. But they were also forced to feed seven young men of the Bolshevik army and not one of them would not so much as dig a potato for her. Again, forced by war conditions, they moved into Arkardia. Here John became the mayor of the town and as part of his duties had to act as arbitrator between the Red and White Bolsheviks. To keep peace and to save their own lives the Gossens who never used spirits themselves kept drinks available, to be offered to the rough, crude Bolsheviks when they threatened them. One night a drunk Bolshevik (Bolski) came to their house. Agatha with a lamp in her hand opened the door to find a revolver pointed at her. John came at once and offered another drink and it saved her life.

The Gossens never felt safe in Siberia. Agatha remembers how they hid 40 bushels of wheat in a hole in the ground, covered it over with bricks and plastered mud on top to keep the Bolsheviks from taking their food. She also recalls with horror the awful lice that crawled all over the soldiers and prisoners from the jails. She told how at one time she and John had killed two pigs but the 'Bolskis' got word of it and ordered them to send the meat to Slovgade. Agatha begged, "Please let us keep it, then you will live and we will live." They doled out more drinks — and were allowed to keep the meat — even though from every home they were taking cows, chickens and pigs in such quantities they couldn't use it all. When they had too much the Bolsheviks would burn the meat in the haystacks. Starving people stood by and watched it burn!

Another time when a Bolshevik threatened John, Agatha had a two-tined roasting fork heated on the stove. She threatened to brand the Bolski with it if he didn't leave. He left. In 1923 the Gossens second daughter Katharina was born.

When John's term of office as mayor was up he refused to stay at the village any longer. He said, "I'm stronger than the Bolsheviks! I'm going to Canada!" He had a big sale and because he had ready cash they weren't allowed to sail second class. Consequently they had to buy all their meals. Their tickets cost \$1000 apiece but the children travelled free. In 1926 the Gossens were on the last boat that took immigrants out of Russia, Canada bound.

They came first to Rusten, Saskatchewan for one winter, then on to Lethbridge where they worked on

sugar beet farms. On a Hutterite farm in southern Alberta where John was employed Mrs. Gossen tells of how she and Annie stooked grain. The men had cut seven rounds on the field and left. She and Annie stooked that, then went to the house to say they were ready for more. The men started cutting again and when they finished that night she and Annie took the last bundles off the carrier.

In 1929 John's cousin, Mr. Neufeldt made arrangements for the Gossens to buy a farm at Goodfare. After several other moves in the Grande Prairie area the Gossens settled at a farm north of Beaverlodge in 1944. By now Annie had married Clayton Third of Goodfare and Kay had married Simon Jantz of Crooked Creek. They had three children each.



Mr. and Mrs. John Gossen.

At Beaverlodge the Gossens farmed until 1957 when they moved into town. When on the farm, John couldn't forget old country ways. One spring he bought seed oats from Verne Johnson and was to get 100 pails. When Verne tossed in a few extra, John, shocked, exclaimed about it. "Oh what's a few pails of oats?" asked Verne. "In Russia," explained John, "100 pails is 100 pails!"

On their farm at Beaverlodge Agatha was as active outside as in. She kept chickens, sold eggs, milked cows and sold butter. She stooked every fall until she was 65 years old. When they finally gave up the farm they bought a house in Beaverlodge. John kept busy working at the lumber yard and at the U.G.G. elevator

— first with Ed Batter and then with John Ditter. Agatha's knowledge of sewing brought many customers to her door. When not sewing for others she busied herself with her garden and yard, and her handicraft hobbies. She also became a regular church attender and an appreciated member of the United Church Women.

John and Agatha celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary in 1961 in the church hall with all their Beaverlodge friends. Their daughter Kay was unable to be with them because of cold and snowdrifts — it being that kind of a night.

John passed away in 1966 at the age of 78 after two years of illness. For five years Agatha lived alone in Beaverlodge and took on the care of a young minister in the town whom she came to think of as "my son." She laughed as she recalled how she had hidden a pipe and thrown out the tobacco someone had given him because she didn't like him to smoke. And remembers yet, breaking up tete-a-tetes between him and way-laying young females by calling out "Mr. \_\_\_\_\_! Telephone."

Mrs. Gossen celebrated her 85th birthday in 1974 with three big events. Her mother told her she was born at midnight so she celebrates June 18 and 19. Members of the Beaverlodge band honored her with a visit and a recital as they have done in the past, and the Hythe Pioneer Lodge where she now resides had an afternoon tea for her on the 20th. And all this after the Senior Citizens had had such a big day at the Proctor and Gamble plant near Grande Prairie on the 19th.

Mrs. Gossen has an unlimited fund of stories that she told in her broken Russian and her inimitable way. She has a rare sense of humor which has saved her sanity many times. Talking to her at the Hythe Pioneer Home she was spry and happy. Her room has become a little hobby shop with all sorts of her creations that she's willing to part with for a price. Hospitable and gracious she served coffee and lunch as she reminisced. She says she still gets a lot out of life and expects to get still more for many years to come. God bless!

#### WILLIAM GREGORY

William lived a little north of Bear Paw Abbott and perhaps was somewhat awkward. He was short of stature, and originally worked on Walter McFarlane's survey party. His major eccentricity was that in the summer he would walk barefoot and in a straight line. If a mudhole was in his path he would invariably walk through it rather than go around it, hence he became known as Billy Kerplunk. Billy should not be confused with "Barefoot Smith" another member of the community who applied Russian plaster and mixed his mud with his bare feet.

Later, Billy operated a livery barn at Lake Saskatoon.

#### TOSTEN HAJEM

Tosten Hajem was born in Halingdal, Norway. He came to Leeds, North Dakota and worked for several years for farmers in that area. He came to what later became known as the Albright district and bought the land that Cobb Francis had homesteaded. Clifford Beisel owns the land now.



Tosten died in 1940 and is buried in the Gimle cemetery.

### WILLIAM HALSTEAD

William Clarence Halstead was born on the Irish Sea in 1886 but claimed London, England as his birth place. Orphaned at the age of six he was brought to Canada by family friends and spent the rest of his early years in Ontario. Venturing west he was in this area as early as 1909 where he helped survey with the McFarlane group. During the next few years he was in and out of this area many times — sometimes on foot and sometimes with ox team. He filed on his homestead north of Beaverlodge around 1909-1911. When the First World War came he, along with many others, walked out of the country to join up but he was rejected because of his health — so he came back to his homestead where he lived until his death in 1952. He married the former Edna Fowler and raised a family of three girls.

Edna Fowler was born in Edmonton the only daughter of Will and Martha Fowler. She had two brothers, Frank and Melvin. Their father was of Irish descent and their mother of Irish and German. Edna took her schooling in Edmonton and attended the Camrose Normal school for teachers. She was teaching in central Alberta at the time her folks moved to the Beaverlodge district in 1928. They took a farm just two and one-half miles north of Beaverlodge. Her parents, essentially “home-bodies” had farmed in central Alberta prior to their coming to Beaverlodge. Their father Will not only farmed but was also a carpenter, a harness maker and a “smithy”. Mother Martha was a talented musician and artist delighting mainly in “china painting”. She was also a life member of the Women’s Missionary Society. They left Beaverlodge in the early thirties and were in Chilliwack when Will died. Martha returned to live with her sister in Edmonton until her death.

Edna joined her parents at Beaverlodge and taught school at Halcourt where she met Bill Halstead. They were married in 1932. She took time out from her school teaching to raise three girls, Melvina, Glenelda and Wilma. Then she taught two years at Two Rivers, two years at Mt. Saskatoon, one year at North Beaverlodge and in 1949 she began teaching at Beaverlodge. She taught there until her retirement in 1965.

Edna, always a fun-loving person, had a ready wit and a humorous comeback for most occasions. She is especially remembered for her apt cliches. One noon hour she was sitting alone in the staff room having a cup of tea. Ruth Bristow brought Superintendent Frank Toews in and Edna rose and said, “Hello Mr. Toews! Would you like to have tea with this old bag?” Mr. Toews’ jaw dropped — then he realized she meant the used tea bag.

At North Beaverlodge a teacherage was provided. Edna was crossing the school yard to the teacherage when she got caught in the cross-fire of a snowball fight. Don Peace even dared to fire one in her direction. Rather than give way she pitched in too. “Don thought I’d run, but I just gave him as good as he gave

me!” she told his folks later. The boys beat a hasty retreat from her deadly aim.

Never to be forgotten was the beautiful Christmas tree one of her Grade V pupils brought for the classroom at her request. It was admired and exclaimed over during the festive season much to Edna’s satisfaction. It was only after the holidays were passed that Edna was allowed to hear that the beautiful blue spruce she had in her room had once graced the lawn of the Research Station.

Edna like her mother, was an active member of the Women’s Missionary Society until its amalgamation with the W.A. to which she transferred her enthusiasm. She also sang in the United Church choir and the choral groups besides frequently acting as organist for the church.

After her retirement in 1965 she and a friend took a trip to the South Pacific on a cargo ship that stopped at all the Islands from Hawaii to Australia including New Zealand. From then until her death in 1972 she did a great deal of travelling, seeing Arizona, Mexico, Vancouver Island and the British Isles. She was on her way home from Penticton when she died in Edmonton.

Melvina is married to Cliff Haggarty, has six boys and they farm at Provost. Glenelda, Mrs. John Bishop, lives in Grande Prairie is a secretary and the mother of a boy and a girl. Wilma, Mrs. Cornelius Friesen, lives east of Grande Prairie on a farm, has two girls and a boy, and teaches school.

### WILLIAM AND EDITH HODGES

William George Hodges, Bill, was born in Worcestershire, England in 1888. He came to Canada in 1913 with his friend Percy Stephens. They worked on farms in Manitoba and Saskatchewan for nearly two years. In 1915 they travelled north to the Peace River district and took up homesteads in the Beaverlodge area. They were accompanied on these journeys north by their brothers Ben Hodges and Leonard Stephens, who had arrived in Canada in 1914. In 1916 Bill and Percy travelled to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan where they



Visitors at Bill Hodge's homestead, 1924. Back row: Lucy, Bill and Edith Hodges holding Connie. The children in front are Betty Hodges, Percy Stephens Jr., Jo Hodges with Jim Bailey seated.





Sammy Timmins, 1917.

joined the Canadian Army — 128th battalion. They were soon sent overseas where they saw plenty of action. Bill was wounded at Passchendaele and sent back to Canada where he was in hospital in Toronto for many months. He was discharged in 1919 and returned to the Peace River district.

In 1920 Bill married Edith Stephens, whom he had met in London during the war when he had gone with Percy to visit. Edith had spent many months in the Women's Army as a cook. After her discharge in 1919 she came to Canada with her mother, Gertrude Stephens, her sisters Lucy and Gertie and brother Ernest.

Bill and Edith farmed in the Beaverlodge area except for three years when they lived at Ladner, B.C. until 1948 when they retired and moved to Langley, B.C. They raised six children, four of whom are still living: Jo, Mrs. Arland Morse, Prince George, B.C. who has four boys and one girl; Betty (Mrs. Albert Cleese) of Beaverlodge who has three boys and one girl; Gertie (Mrs. Del Barron), Langley, B.C. — two girls and one boy; Fred of Langley, B.C.; Leonard died in 1959; Connie, Mrs. Walter Kerr, deceased 1969 who had three boys and three girls.

While the Hodges lived at Beaverlodge, Bill was very active in community affairs. He was on the board for the North Beaverlodge school in the early days and later for the Beaverlodge school district. He was councillor for the Municipality of Grande Prairie and also for the County of Grande Prairie. He was one of the charter members of the Canadian Legion Branch No. 121 and a member of the Masonic Lodge at Hythe.

They continued to live at Langley until Bill's death in 1955 and Edith's in 1964.

#### THE VEN HODGES FAMILY — by Lucy Hodges

In 1920 Lucy Stephens emigrated to Canada with her mother, her brother Ernest and two sisters, Edith

and Gertie. The new immigrants lived with Percy on his Soldier grant until the girls married. It was in 1923 that Lucy and Ven Hodges were married in the Anglican church of the Appleton district. They lived on Ven's homestead, SW 15-72-10-6, where three sons, George, James and Owen were born. To be closer to the North Beaverlodge school, Ven bought the N.E., S.E. and S.W. quarters of 28-72-10-6. Eric was born here. All the boys attended this school. George is in construction business in Grande Prairie. Owen, a plumber lives on a farm near Grande Prairie. Jim and Eric farm in the Albright district.

The Hodges have always had a planned farm program. In 1926 they bought seed wheat, the new variety Garnet, which threshed out a year later at 62 bushels per acre. They grew registered oats so had a good market for seed grain. Too they developed a fine herd of Herefords, and were among the founders of the First Junior Beef Club north of Red Deer. Owen and Eric were members of the Beaverlodge 4-H. Since then all the younger generation have been active in 4-H Clubs and have won many awards.

On occasion Ven was known to remark that farmers who raised livestock need never suffer for want of bank credit.

In 1928 when the railroad was being built from Wembley to Hythe, a survey party of ten men set up camp in the Hodges' yard. Lucy Hodges with help from Gertie Dick gave the men meals. The general verdict was that if the district could produce as good vegetables as were regularly served the success of the railroad was assured.

Both Lucy and Ven served on the North Beaverlodge school board. In every way possible they were active in the community, the centre of social life in earlier years.

George married Eileen Bredeson of Glen Leslie. They have a family of five — Victor, Wayne, Rosemarie, William and Sharon. Jim is married to Mollie Harriss of London, England. There are two



Eric Hodges with his second prize calf wearing the halter made by Jens Rask, Beaverlodge, shoe repair shop.





Ven Hodges taking out a new line of power machinery, 1931.

sons, Roy and Leonard. Owen is married to Agnes Bakastad and they have four children, Janice, Donald, Larry and Charlotte. Eric, the youngest is married to Barbara Clarke, formerly of Wembley. There are three children, Beverley, Darrell and Keith. This means 14 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren, Shelley and Kimberley.

Ven passed away on August 20, 1956 from a heart attack. For some years Lucy remained on the farm then moved into Beaverlodge and bought a home. Here she enjoyed gardening to have beautiful flowers and an excellent vegetable garden. In September 1973 after a sale she joined others who moved into the Senior Citizens' Apartments where each resident is independent in his own suite yet shares the fellowship of the group.

You really can't say that Lucy is retired because she is active in her church and the women's organization as well as the Eastern Star. She makes very beautiful quilts for her grandchildren. Too she sews. She has been an active Beaverlodge Craft member but does many of her crafts at home now.

Lucy is an extremely out going person. She always has a humorous or happy story — You'll hear her musical laugh. You'll hear of the kindnesses she does for others. Truly her motto is to bring happiness to others.

#### **WILLIAM AND EMMA HURLEY**

William Hurley and wife Emma came from Dakota to Edmonton in 1913. While in Dakota, William worked as a lather. In 1913 he and the Jim Packs came to Beaverlodge to file on land. The Hurleys moved to their new home in the spring of 1914, over the Edson Trail bringing all the family. They were known to be kind and generous to all their neighbors. William and Emma celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary in Beaverlodge in 1928 and one well remembered statement was "We'll see you here again in 50 years." William was a staunch Mason and passed away in 1935

at the age of 77 in Grande Prairie hospital. Emma died at the family farm in 1941. They had three children Guy, Winnie and Gordon.

Gordon remained on the farm homesteaded by his father. Laura McColeman came from Leduc in 1937 to work in Beaverlodge and in 1942 she and Gordon were married. At Richmond Hill, on the way to the wedding ceremony, Laura commented, "I've gone this far, I may as well go all the way."

Gordon was well known by his neighbors for his thoughtful nature and was always ready and willing to lend a helping hand. He always enjoyed a joke whether on himself or someone else. In 1936 he purchased a 15-30 International tractor and farming with horses was brought to an end. He worked with many threshing crews throughout the area. He was also known for acting in plays. One particular play still remains in the minds of many. He had the leading male role in a play in the Albright Community hall when accidentally he pushed the leading lady off the stage, a three-foot drop. The play continued and people thought it was part of the act.

Gordon was one of the original members of Alberta Wheat Pool, and in 1972 received a plaque in honor of 50 years membership. Laura, the youngest of 12 children, was born in Leduc and was adored by all her sisters and brothers. She came to the Beaverlodge area with her mother to visit her sister, Minnie Hawthorne. After working for the Hurley family for a while she decided to stay as Gordon's wife. Laura was well known in the area for her cooking, especially her bread. She had open arms to everyone and a smile on her face and was an active member of community activities and a member of the Riverside Ladies' Aid. It has been said that if you felt depressed or low just go see Laura and Gordon and they would make you feel better. When you left, you were all smiles again.

Laura passed away in 1964 at the age of 54. Gordon moved to the Pioneer Lodge in 1967. In August, 1974 he



Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Hurley taken in Beaverlodge March 18, 1929 on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

celebrated his 90th birthday in the Auxiliary Hospital in Grande Prairie.

Laura and Gordon Hurley had three sons. Bill, the oldest married Sharron Eckstrom of Wembley and they have three boys and two girls. Bill and family live in Beaverlodge. Donnie married Janice Oszust and with their son and daughter live in Grande Prairie. Austin, the third son married Jane Baker of Whitecourt. They live in Grande Prairie and have one son.

#### THE JOHN IRVINE FAMILY

The John Irvine family consisting of John and his wife Hilda and three children Warren, Duncan and Barbara left Wellwood, Manitoba in April 1928. Travelling by train they arrived at Wembley, the end of the steel in time for the spring break up. That spring operating from a trailer John did custom breaking with his Rumley tractor and that fall did custom threshing. Later he moved into Beaverlodge working in the Chevrolet garage for Allen and Davis until the summer of 1930. At that time he purchased a farm in the North Beaverlodge area on the edge of Hay Lake. He farmed there until 1942 when following a house fire he sold out and moved to Dawson Creek.

Dial phones had come to Beaverlodge and the pitch was to modernize the prosaic black box which hung on the wall. Two-tone phones were promoted, at extra price.

"Not for me", said our favorite ex-School-Marm, "I've had one for years".

"Can't be", says the bright young A.G.T. agent. "They are something brand new. How long have you had yours?"

"Ever since I painted the kitchen", with an Irish twinkle.

It was a quiet wedding. The bride was attended by her sister; the groom was resolute and probably would have been more comfortable out in the field. But there they were; Nellie, the bride; Olga, the bridesmaid; Frank, the groom and the cleric. Everything seemed in order until at the last minute Frank glanced around and liked what he saw. Swiftly he changed the

positions of Nellie and Olga and the ceremony was commenced. And why not, when two of the three principals were in agreement!

#### MR. AND MRS. PAUL JOHNSON

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Johnson came to North Beaverlodge from the State of New York, probably about 1919 or '20. They were very active in community affairs and Mrs. Johnson was a favorite entertainer with her recitations at the Literary Society programmes. She was also a member of that active and popular organization, the Riverside Ladies' Aid.

The Paul Johnsons sold out and returned to New York State in December 1923.

#### THE KERRS — by Walter Kerr, Junior

My uncle, Walter Kerr and my grandmother, Mary Eva Kerr born in 1867, Confederation year in Idaho, arrived in the Beaverlodge district in November, 1927. They settled on a farm northwest of Beaverlodge, in the area which later became the Albright district. My uncle was interested in seed grain production and grew registered and certified seed oats for many years. I now farm part of the land he settled on.

In the spring of 1928 my dad and mother, Lorne Kerr and Josie Vinson of the State of Washington, my sister Marion and I arrived from Keoma, Alberta, 30 miles north of Calgary where dad had been farming since 1910 but had become discouraged there following three dry years. Another brother Winifred moved to Rolla following World War I but did not stay.

Dad shipped in his machinery and livestock on the railroad and moved to the farm during spring break-up, which turned out to be quite a chore as the roads were almost impassable. He had purchased some land next to my uncle's and farmed there until he retired in 1960. Dad, too was interested in seed production and grew registered and certified seed oats and barley for many years. His farm is now owned and farmed by Henry Kaiser.

In 1930 my brother Allan was born in the Grande Prairie Hospital. My sister, brother and myself received most of our education in the North Beaverlodge and Beaverlodge schools.

My sister Marian is married to Don Cole of Kennewick, Washington, where he owns and manages a petroleum pump business. They have two daughters, Dianne and Donna and a son Dale.

Allan married Joan Roberts, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Barney Roberts of Beaverlodge. They live in Brooks where he owns and operates an appliance store. They have two sons Norman and Keith.

In 1945 after my discharge as an air gunner on a Lancaster Bomber in the R.C.A.F. I purchased land near dad's place, where I still farm today. In 1947 Connie Hodges, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Hodges, and I were married. During the years that followed we had six children, three boys, Larry is a technician at the Research Station, Jerry is with A.G.T. and Bruce is in school, and three girls, Karen and the twins Maureen and Colleen. All the children are still living at home. Connie passed away in 1969.

Mention has been made of the seed growing efforts of the Kerr brothers. In 1952 Walter was elected to be a



Robertson Associate of the Canadian Seed Growers Association, the highest honor of this farmer-controlled organization. Lorne also was a meticulous grower and is remembered particularly for his production of Fairway crested wheatgrass in rows in the mid 30's before grass seed production became the vogue in the Beaverlodge Valley.

#### JOHN LOUIS KEWLEY

Mr. and Mrs. John Louis Kewley were among the pioneers of the Hythe district. Lou was born at Gretch Veg, Laxey, Isle of Man, on January 27, 1881. He became manager of a retail grocery store in Moss Side, Manchester, England. He married Harriet Emma (May) Baker on September 30, 1908, a widow with two small sons, Walter and Leonard. To this marriage, a daughter Lillian, was born in 1912.

In 1914 the family moved to Canada, living in old Battleford, Saskatchewan, where Lou worked as an attendant at the Mental Institute. While there Walter joined the Armed Forces and was killed overseas.

On November 19, 1915, a son Lawrence was born, and in 1919 the family moved to the Peace River country and farmed a mile and one half north of the Albright store. During the next 20 years the Kewleys were active members of the community. Lou was one of the organizers of the Albright Hall Board and an active member of that body for a number of years. He also served on the Hythe School Board as secretary. Both Lawrence and Lillian received their early schooling in the old log Happy Valley school.

Mrs. Kewley was a good neighbour, as was everyone in those early days and helped anyone in need.

Len also farmed in the area during the 30's, but later moved to British Columbia, where he is retired in South Burnaby.

Due to failing health Lou Kewley sold his farm in 1945 and moved to Newton and later to White Rock, B.C. He died December 11, 1953, predeceased by his wife on April 29, 1952. His son Lawrence was killed in action in March, 1945. His remaining daughter, Lillian, Mrs. Sid Hesketh, lives in Camrose, Alberta.

#### THE LAY FAMILY — by Murray Lay

Harold Raymond Lay married Evelyn Iris Pope November 9, 1915 and farmed at Danville, Quebec.

Dad got tired of shipping cream, paying high taxes, separate school taxes and winter road taxes. They read articles in the Family Herald like "Strawberries in the Peace" by W. D. Albright in 1927. The West sounded adventurous to them and in August 1928, accompanied by their three young children, daughter Dorothy and two sons Murray and William, they took the excursion and came to Wembley, the end of the steel. There we were greeted by dad's two brothers. Art Lay was farming four miles west of Beaverlodge. He had previously been in Montreal employed for ten years by the C.P.R. as a fireman. He was a quiet, thoughtful person, a Mason and proud of his friendship with his neighbors, Murdock and Alex Dewar. Art passed away in June 20, 1967. Bud Lay, a veteran of World War I was operating a pool room and barber shop in Wembley in 1919. He farmed west of Beaverlodge for about 15 years. Bud enjoyed garden-



Harold Lay family in Danville, Que. before leaving for the Peace Country. Harold, Evelyn, with children Dorothy, Murray and Bill with great aunt and uncle and Grandma Lay.

ing and grew a lot of strawberries and vegetables. Around 1944 he went to Hudson Hope to wait for the railroad and the development that was sure to come. He had been there as a surveyor in 1906. In 1968, due to ill health, he was taken to the Veterans' Home in Edmonton and passed away January 20, 1973. Neither Art nor Bud ever married.

My dad and mother bought a quarter of land N.W. 15-72-10 belonging to Abraham Lincoln Hitsman, with neighbors George Washington Pack to the north and Ben Hodges to the south. For seven years their first home was a log structure with a sod roof. Times were hard but they were happy and the future looked promising. The first winter dad cleared 60 acres of land with an axe and helped other neighbors. In 1937 he built a frame home. In the fall of 1929 he delivered the first load of grain to the U.G.G. elevator now operated by Mel Ray. When he was driving down the grade, before the rails were laid, he spotted a large weasel so jumped on it to kill it. Says that paid off better than the load of grain did. We had at that time a horse for which we had paid \$10.00 and another for which we had traded an old Gramophone.

One memorable trip was the summer we drove to Lake Saskatoon to pick berries. There at the island we met the Morrisons from Halcourt and the Joe Farnsworth family of La Glace. Plenty of visiting took place and we were happy to return with a water barrel two-thirds full of saskatoons.

My folks farmed until 1946, then semi-retired. Mother passed away suddenly January 12, 1955. She was a quiet but cheerful woman and spent many an hour patching and mending for the family, and also enjoyed doing it for others. She was great to write letters and keep us in touch with our relatives and friends back East. Mother always had an eye out for the well being of her friends and neighbours. My dad spent his remaining years in the town of Beaverlodge and had a home at White Rock, B.C. While at White Rock he married Mildred Murdoch of Kelowna. She passed away two years later in 1961. Dad passed away on October 14, 1964 in the Beaverlodge hospital. Mother and dad are buried in the Riverside cemetery.



Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lay, 40th wedding anniversary, 1955.

Dorothy, Bill and I attended the North Beaverlodge school with Miss Kathy Robson (Mrs. Knut Tveiten) as our first teacher. We then attended high school in Beaverlodge. No busses in those days — walk or ride a horse.

Bill attended Normal school in Edmonton in 1939 and taught at Annellen school, west of Hythe in 1941-42. The war being on at the time, he joined up as a Navigator Flying Officer and was shot down over Munster, Germany March 25, 1945 at the age of 24 years.

Dorothy married Bill O'Brien of Virginia in 1942, had one son Donald, then separated from her husband. Thirteen years later she married Dave Tschettters of Hythe. They have two sons, Tom born in 1955 and Doug in 1958. They are both taking their schooling in Hythe. In her early years Dorothy enjoyed riding horses and always ended up on one of the "Wild ones of the West". During the summer months she enjoyed hunting up a good berry patch and for a number of years raised a lot of hens.

I, Murray, worked for several years at Yellowknife for the C.M. & S. Mine and spent over two years in the Navy. In 1946 I took over the home farm 2½ miles northwest of Beaverlodge and married Isabel Fraser of Teepee Creek in 1948. We have enjoyed grain farming and raised registered Herefords for 17 years. For the past four years I have been employed at the Air Base as a steam engineer. There have been ups and downs but it's been a good life. Isabel's parents were both born in Ontario and came west to farm in 1919. We have four children: daughters Pat (Mrs. Gary



The Murray Lay family, 1973 (L) Jerry, Isabel, Murray, Pat, Dennis, Linda.

Pfau) of Prince George and Linda, doing secretarial work in Grande Prairie; sons Dennis and Jerry attending the University of Alberta in Edmonton and home during summer months to help farm.

During their high school years Pat and Linda were Tartanette members and travelled in Centennial year with the group to dance at the Antigonish, Nova Scotia Highland Games and at Expo, Montreal. Dennis also attended Expo, travelling with the Beaverlodge school group. A few years later Jerry decided it was his turn and in the fall of 1972 went on a 26-day tour of Europe travelling with the Beaverlodge school group on the Kontiki Tour. In 1962 the Lay family attended the World's Fair in Seattle, and in 1966 we drove across Canada as far as Danville, Quebec, where I (Murray) was born.

We have been active in the United Church, Legion and Ladies' Auxiliary and our local farm organization.

#### PERCY LEE

Percy Lee, a cousin of Gordon Hurley homesteaded north of Mel Byers' farm and is remembered as being a good baseball pitcher. Ultimately in 1920 he returned to Yakima and worked in the Fire Department.

Percy's sister was married to Dr. Scott over Robson's way. Percy remained a bachelor.

When things didn't go right, Percy would rhyme:  
"Ain't it funny, when you've got no money  
All you get is sympathy."

#### JOSEPH LOWE

Joe was the youngest of the 14 children of Jacob and Prudence Lowe of Winterburn. When he was five years old his mother died and his father moved with Joe and his sister to Vegreville, where some of the other older married children were living. In 1928 Joe, Eva and their father came to Beaverlodge to make their home at Bert Cunninghams in the Albright district. Esther Cunningham is Joe's sister. Eva stayed a short time then went back to a sister in Vegreville. Joe attended the North Beaverlodge school and helped Bert on the farm.

Joe and Virgil Pack from over by Hay Lake each had ponies for their means of transportation when they attended the plays put on in the Albright hall or any where else the boys decided to go. For a little diver-





Happy birthday, Lynnette with parents Joe and Audrey Lowe.



Under the Christmas tree, Lynne and Chuck Lowe.



Museum Day, 1973. Audrey and Joe Lowe.

sion they rode Bert's calves, this was always good for a laugh.

Joe joined up in 1941 and after spending some time in Nanaimo, B.C. and Dundurn, Saskatchewan went overseas in the fall of 1943 with the R.C.A. and transferred to the R.C.E.M.E. After spending a short time in England he landed in Italy and drove up through to Holland. He was discharged in 1945 and came home to Bert's. In 1953 Audrey Sutherland came to teach in the North Beaverlodge school. Her dad had told her, "It will be like going home." He didn't know how true those words were to be. Audrey was born a few miles from that school and had lived there until she was three, then her family left to homestead across the Wapiti.

Joe and Audrey were married in 1954 and moved to Beaverlodge. They have two children — Lynnette who graduates from high school this year and plans to take a writing course in the United States this summer. Chuck is in Junior High and has yet to make up his mind where his future lies.

Audrey taught in the Beaverlodge Elementary school and now though not confined to regular teaching is really a "full-time" substitute. She is also a member of the Legion Auxiliary.

Joe works for Foster's Seed and Feed Ltd. and is an active Legion member.

#### MIKKEL MANDT — by Lena Larsen

Mikkel Mandt was born in Telemarken, Norway in 1892. His folks had a very good home. One of his brothers was a professor at a college. Mikkel attended an agricultural school. He was always very fond of farming and he liked especially to work with flowers and fruit bushes.

He decided it would be interesting to see Canada. He came to Camrose and stayed there for a year. Mr. and Mrs. Hans Hommy attended a Sons of Norway Convention in Camrose so Mikkel and the Hommys met. Mikkel decided to come to the Albright district in 1928 and stayed with the Hans Hommys a couple of years.

He says times got hard and it wasn't easy to get work. He did work at sawmills, road construction work, brush work and many other things. He bought land and farmed it for several years, then he sold it to Johnston Fair. He planned to go back to Norway but his health failed him. Diabetes became a serious problem and he lost his eyesight through it. He is now in the Grande Prairie Auxiliary Hospital. He says he has always liked Canada.

Mikkel is not able to write now so I have written his history. Mikkel was always helpful when he stayed with my folks. He was so kind to help mother with the dishes, etc. and as we often say, he will leave this old world without an unkind word about anyone. He speaks so well about the Auxiliary Hospital but it does get lonesome sometimes. Albert Anderson goes to see him often and writes letters for him to his sisters in Norway.

#### CLARENCE NELSON

In December, 1928 a new family arrived at Beaverlodge and rented the Clarence Lossing farm



The first AI calf born in the Peace River country, owned by Clarence Nelson.

south of the Experimental Farm. They were Mr. and Mrs. John Nelson, sons Bill, Clarence and Alex and daughter Reta. They had come from Asquith, Saskatchewan. Clarence's father had originally farmed near Toronto and had homesteaded at Govan, Saskatchewan before moving to Asquith.

Their first crop was in the fall of 1929. It was in stook about the middle of September when a 21-inch snowfall covered everything. This was their initiation to the Peace. Needless to say, the weather turned warm and the crop was harvested under sunny skies. The Nelsons returned to Saskatchewan in March 1930. There Clarence married Mary McTavish of Asquith and the young couple returned to Beaverlodge where they have farmed since. They have raised a family of four children: Marshall, Angus, Heather and Arthur. Marshall married Maxine Olson; they have three children, Carrie, Greg and Kelly. Angus married Doris Moncrieff; they have two girls, Laurie and Lisa. Heather married Kenneth Moonen in 1972 and lives in Grande Prairie. Arthur is still at home. Those who know the Nelsons do not need to be told that they are Scots through and through.

The first time Clarence and Mary saw the farm which they developed, it was all bush. Actually the whole area north and east of Beaverlodge was covered with bush for an area of about 10 square miles. Most of this is under cultivation now and is a nice farming area. Quite a change since 1928.

Mary was a member of the Riverside Ladies' Aid for a number of years and was president for two years. Clarence served on the board of directors for the Albright Mutual Telephone Company until the AGT put in the buried cable in the spring of 1972. He was on the board of directors for the Grande Prairie Livestock Shipping Association and after the amalgamation, with the Peace River Livestock Cooperative for 25 years. He refused his nomination for another three year term in 1972. He has been on the board of



Clarence Nelson on the Main Street, Beaverlodge, 1929.

directors for the Hythe REA for ten years. He was a 4H leader for 12 years, working with Ken Edgerton with the Beef Club and Mrs. Ivy Eastman with the Dairy Club and enjoyed both very much. He and Fred Drysdale helped to form the first A.I. Association and Clarence owned the first A.I. calf of the Peace. He recalls that William Harcourt hauled the first load of gravel to the Bentum United Church, using W. D. Albright's team and he hauled the second. He also assisted in building Beaverlodge's first hospital and the Co-op store, and like nearly everyone in town was a member of the Beaverlodge band, playing the snare drum. He enjoyed the band very much but, as he says, when he left it, "The band played on".

The Nelsons have had two surprises. One was when the family and their friends helped them celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary, December 30, 1971. The other was when a deep-well oil rig was set up on their land and went down to a depth of 14,000 feet. When it was finished, it was capped with a "Christmas Tree" and the results are unknown locally.

There have been two near tragedies. One happened in 1934 when Clarence was run over by a team in the bush and had his leg ripped open. He had to ride a mile to Arthur Johnsons on horse back, in mid-winter, 25 below zero. The other was in 1968 when his tractor ran over him and he was hospitalized for five weeks with a broken pelvis, collar bone, cheek bone and ribs. He convalesced a week afterwards, then swathed and combined 800 acres. It must be the grits, Clarence!

Clarence and Mary came in with a Model T Ford and \$250.00 cash. They paid Guy Ireland \$25.00 for a cow and Bill Perdue \$200.00 for a team of horses and \$12.00 for a set of harness. That fall they owed Adams Brothers a store bill of \$60.00 and tried to explain it all to Bill Adams. Instead of being alarmed Bill forthwith tried to sell them a radio, which they refused. This all spurred Clarence into action and in three weeks time he had hauled sufficient wood into town, at \$2.00 for a



load, to pay the account. This is the only store bill he ever ran. Clarence comments that they pioneered but they did not suffer.

Bill Nelson is retired at Creston. Alex and his wife Mary live at Penticton. Reta married Ed Barrick and lives in Toronto.

#### **JAMES PACK — by Vivian, Vergil, Edna and Tудie**

Our grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. William Hurley with their son Gordon and our parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Pack left their homes in Walhalla, North Dakota to go west. They arrived in Edmonton where they stayed for a few months and there heard about the land in the Peace River country that was being opened up for homesteading.

The men left Edmonton in 1913 to make the trip to file on land, then they returned to Edmonton where their eldest, Vivian Pack was born. In January of 1914 with all their belongings and provisions loaded on sleighs and 30 head of cattle they left Edmonton. Going to Edson and down the Edson Trail, they travelled as much as possible on the ice of the Smoky River. They arrived in Grande Prairie on March 8, 1914 and they stayed there until after the spring break-up, before proceeding on to the land they had filed on a few miles north of Beaverlodge.

They were joined a couple years later by Jim's three brothers, Bill and his family, George and Fred Pack who filed on land close by and remained there the rest of their lives.

By 1922 there were three children, Vivian, Vergil and Edna. Jim and Winnie left the homestead and moved to Beaverlodge where Jim worked on the telegraph line that was being built north of Fort St. John.

When the railroad reached Wembley, Jim bought a car and ran a taxi service from there to Dawson Creek. When the railroad continued to Hythe in 1928, the new town of Beaverlodge was being built a mile west of the old town. Jim and his friend Jack Johnson turned to carpenter work and helped build many of the homes, stores and a new school in the new town.

In the spring of 1930 times were beginning to look bad. Dad loaded us all up again and we moved back to the old homestead, into the log house with the sod roof, until he was able to move the frame house he had built in Beaverlodge.

In the spring of 1933 a new baby sister arrived to join the family. We named her Tудie.

Vivian married Mildred Beisel. They reside in Dawson Creek. They raised a family of four sons and two daughters. Vivian is employed as a farm machinery salesman.

Vergil married Susie Wertz and lives in Beaverlodge. Vergil is employed at the Research Station. They raised a family of three daughters.

Edna married to Ed Anderson make their home in Dawson Creek. Ed is in the lumber business. They raised a family of four girls and one son.

Tудie, Mrs. Jim Rodgers has two sons and two daughters and they live in Smithers, where they own and operate a hardware store.

#### **LLOYD PACK FAMILY — by Jean Borgedahl**

Esther Bolton married Lloyd Pack, son of Bill Pack of Albright in the Lake Saskatoon Church in November 1926. They made their first home on dad's homestead in the Albright district, about eight miles north of Beaverlodge. They built themselves a log house and lived there for five years. Lewis and Jean were born there, both delivered by midwives.

In 1931 dad and mother bought the Bryce Peterson homestead on the banks of the Beaverlodge river four miles north and west of Beaverlodge. Here two more daughters were born, Joyce and Bertha. When Bertha was just a baby, dad had an operation which paralysed him and mom took over and raised the family. Dad stayed at home until 1945 when he went to a nursing home in Edmonton. At that time there were not any nursing homes in our area. He lived there until he passed away from pneumonia at the age of 49.

Mom kept living on the farm until the family was grown and on their own. She farmed her own land as well as milking cows and feeding cattle to keep bread on the table for us. I asked her a few years before she died how she always found money to give us a good Christmas and she said she always raised ducks and would dress them and sell them so we had gifts for Christmas.

Mom was as independent as was possible but we also had very good neighbours who would help whenever it was needed. She went to work in the Beaverlodge Hospital as a cook in 1956. It was a good job for her as she had asthma. She worked for 11 years until she had to retire because of her age. She then lived in her home in Beaverlodge for a few years until she passed away at the age of 68 years.

Lloyd and Esther's family have all married. Lewis, his wife Sydney and two boys live in Terrace, B.C. Jean, Mrs. Paul Borgedahl has three daughters and lives at Valhalla Centre. Joyce, Mrs. Lewis Houde, has two sons and two daughters and lives in London, Ontario. Bertha, Mrs. Calvin Brown has two daughters and one son and they live in Calgary.

#### **THE WILLIAM PACK FAMILY — by Eva Bliss**

William Pack filed on his homestead in the Albright district in 1917. The following year he and his wife Eady moved there with their household belongings, livestock and four children, Alma, Lloyd, Sherwood and Robert. A baby daughter Mabel had passed away before leaving North Dakota where William had farmed. They settled in the Peace River country near his four brothers Fred, George, Ed and Jim who had all taken up homesteads a few years previously.

Ma and dad lived with the Ed Packs till they had a spot brushed for building their log cabin. They then started clearing and breaking the land the hard way. They had many hardships in the early days.

After they moved to Albright they had four more children — Cecil, Eva, Ken and Jack, all of whom attended the North Beaverlodge school.

Ma passed away in 1950 at the age of 65 years and dad in 1959 at the age of 85. Alma and Frank Reynolds died in separate car accidents leaving two small boys. Lloyd and wife Esther (Bolton) have both passed on



Bob Pack, Carl Wedell, Fred Chandler and Arvid Wedell on the top of Saskatoon Mountain — 1926.

leaving four grown children. Also Sherwood and Annie (Wurtz) have passed on.

The remainder of the family, Robert and wife Clara live in Edmonton. They have six grown children. Cecil resides in Fort Nelson, B.C.

Eva and Jack Bliss farm at Valhalla Centre and have five grown children. Ken and Blanche (Fraser) live in Dawson Creek with their two children. Jack and Dorothy (Curry) live in Fort Saskatchewan. They also have two grown boys.

#### **THEODORE PATZER**

Recently the Murray Lay family was visited by Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Patzer of Hanna, Alberta. In 1932 Theodore was in this district and worked for Harry Lay. Now he and his wife were interested in seeing the Lay farm and the many developments in the district in the last 40 years or so. They saw many changes and met old friends.

#### **BASIL WILLIAM PEACE**

I was born February 6, 1910 in the parish of Firth, Orkney Islands and raised on the island of Eday. I left there for Canada March 4, 1929, age 19. I landed at St. John, N.B. March 23, 1929 my destination being Deloraine, Manitoba where an uncle who operated a small grocery store there had arranged a job on a farm for me. For a season I worked for a Scotchman, Charlie Macdonald, a bachelor who had a nasty habit of getting up at 4 a.m. and being out in the field at 6 o'clock.

I gained my first experience in western farming with Clydesdale horses, Charlie's pride and joy. After seeding we made a circuit of the local fairs with 13 head and won quite a few ribbons.

I remember well the afternoon we were preparing to leave for the fairs — we waited to see what a big black cloud was "up to" and I was "treated" to my first experience of a hailstorm — the first for that district in over 40 years farming and the first of many that seem to follow in my wake wherever I settled.

There was some harvesting left to be done, however, then fall plowing, after which a cousin, Charlie Peace who had also been working on a farm in

the area and I headed by train for Flin Flon where we expected to find winter work.

When I reached Deloraine, I had \$20.00 left and only got money from Charlie Macdonald as I needed it. He had agreed to pay \$40.00 a month, which was the going wage, if I "turned out O.K.". Evidently he was reasonably satisfied as I had about \$200.00 coming when I left and an invitation to come back next year.

Flin Flon turned out to be a tent town built around the mine shafts and the rocks. During that week the infamous Wall Street crash took place and we were told that 600 men were laid off immediately from the copper and zinc mines.

There was no work so we back tracked down the line, stopping at lumber towns — Le Pas, Hudson Bay Junction. Finally we got jobs at Bowsman for a dollar a day and board and walking into camp. This was a new experience for us but being 19 years old, we were ready to tackle anything, leaving camp at 6 a.m. and not getting back before 6 p.m. I gradually advanced from "swamper" to "sawyer", and finally ended up on the loading crew where we loaded logs on 8-foot sleighs by the "armstrongcanthook" method. We worked day and night shifts alternate weeks with another landing crew to keep the mill going.

We knew times were tough "on the outside" but some of our chums assured us that they could get us construction work at Regina. Syd Watson, another Scotchman and I went as far as Winnipeg without any luck; the employment office was swamped with men looking for anything in the way of a job. Syd knew people near Eston and I knew some Orkney people in Moose Jaw with whom I had gone to school so we parted company. After visiting with these people for a few days I was put in touch with a Norwegian, Ole Olson who was going up to a railway grading outfit at St. Walburg, northwest of Battleford. I decided to go along and find out how railways were built. However, it turned out I had to come up to the Peace River for this experience. It was decided that no further construction would be done at St. Walburg so our outfit got a sub-contract on the Hythe-Dawson Creek line. All grading machinery, bunk houses, wagons and horses were loaded, a fair-sized train.

When everything was unloaded at the end of steel, then Hythe our next destination was the Preston Lake area, west of Lymburn where we set up camp on a nice level area. This was fine until the rains started and water seeped in on the dirt floor of the cookshack and made everything most unpleasant. For three weeks we never turned a wheel but I was lucky to be able to continue drawing my \$25.00 a month as "bull-cook". "That's the beauty of an education." The cook was Roy Dundas, who had a homestead south of Halcourt, now Bob Dunbar's farm and I later visited him there after he'd gone home to do some "grubbing." Between jobs I had a stop-over in Beaverlodge, where I got a job doing some brushing south of town. Also I remember getting a ride to the Wembley Sports Day, 1930 and sleeping in Rex Ireland's livery barn loft that night in Beaverlodge as I was too late to get a bed anywhere else.

One incident that sticks in my memory occurred





Mel Byers' grasshopper bait spreader.

the day that two fellows who had just come up from Edmonton got a job standing on a home-made dozer blade mounted on a "Cat" being used to push dirt across a slough to add weight to the operation. Evidently the blade rode up on a big lump of gumbo and the older man lost his grip or footing and was crushed to death under the track before the driver could stop. This incident and the circumstances surrounding it was influential in my decision to move to another outfit, where the pay was \$45.00 a month.

Three others and myself hired on in Hythe and three of us rode in the back of a 1929 Model A pickup on top of crates and headed for camp, situated on the Gundy Ranch near Tupper Creek. Along the way the driver left the road, drove down the ditch for some distance, woke up and climbed back out without losing much speed. Everything would have been fine if one of the chaps hadn't lost his hold and landed in the ditch, turning a few summersaults in the process. When we backed up to the "scene of the crime", he was sitting up and feeling for broken bones and miraculously was able to climb aboard and continue on. He was later taken to a doctor but we never learned the extent of his injury. As far as I know, he never came back to camp.

We got to camp in nice time for supper and when I looked across the table, here was Ed Finnan, one of the catskinners from the Bowsman lumber camp in Manitoba. We managed to get in the same sleeping tent, where we bunked together for the rest of the season. Ed became interested in a young lady by the name of Blanche Borden from Hythe, whom he later married and is now retired in Grande Prairie.

My job there was driving two horses on a dump wagon. At the last camp it was all three-horse outfits. From 6 in the morning until 6 at night we caught loads under the elevator graders, proceeded with all due haste to the end of the "fill", drove down the slope and tried to pull the dump lever at the exact instant of command from the "dump boss". If things didn't work out as planned and a load got misplaced, the dump boss usually had a variety of suitable epithets he saved for

such occasions. Then you cranked up your trap door and headed back for the grader, which was pulled by a 60 Holt caterpillar tractor. The "plowshaker", who controlled the operation of the elevating grader also seemed to suffer severe mental anguish on occasion when occasionally a driver didn't get the full co-operation of his horses and ended up with half the dirt missing the wagon. I believe his method of relieving pent-up feeling was very similar to that of the dump boss, but because of the roar of motors, we didn't get the full benefit of his outbursts. However, we could usually get the message from the contortions of his facial expressions!

What we really did enjoy after a day in the dust and dirt was a wash and swim in the Tupper creek, quite close to camp. Plumbing facilities in camp consisted of a barrel of cold water, soap and a basin, plus a 4'x4' "convenience" at the end of a short woodland path, not quite up to present day standards demanded by Labour Unions on work sites. As to the swimming hole, there were no signs up saying "Swim trunks must be worn on all occasions". We didn't have any!

Shortly before freeze-up we had this particular fill across a coulee almost up to grade but when we came out one morning, the whole mass of dirt had dropped 6 or 8 feet. It was a mess! The cut on either side was down to grade level so we had to get dirt from a borrow pit. Soon the nights became cold and we had to haul firewood to keep fires going all night to keep the pit from freezing overnight. The grade kept sinking and we kept filling in, until the weather finally got cold enough to firm things up and they got the steel across it. While all this was going on, I got an inside job as blacksmith's helper, mostly sharpening grader discs by the "heat and hammer" method. There again, as in "bull-cooking" one could readily see where "education" counts! When the work finished another chap, Archie Cameron and I got a ride into Pouce Coupe and I remember we took the full course in the barber shop, even the shampoo! We booked a room in the new addition being built to the Commercial Hotel and it was lovely and warm compared to the tents! Just one slight inconvenience — there were no beds, but after sleeping between 2 blankets for a week, on the floor, and getting used to it, when we did get a bed the luxury was hard to get accustomed to.

We were lucky to get jobs on a trestle bridge just a mile west of Pouce Coupe at the handsome wage of



Log house of Ivor Guest and Godfrey Barnsley, on the present Basil Peace farm.

\$50.00 a month. It was a very mild fall and working outdoors was no big hardship. I was mostly on the pile driver crew, whose job had to be done before the ground froze too much. I also worked on top and was there to witness another fatal accident when the foreman of our crew lost his footing early one morning and fell about 70 feet to the ground. Although quite dark, we were expected to be on the job at 8 a.m. and were getting tools lined up for the day when Joe fell. We carried him up to a car on a makeshift stretcher but he was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

One Sunday we walked up to Dawson Creek and men were busy moving buildings to the new town site from South Dawson. As many as six farm tractors of the day, all doing their best were used for the larger buildings.

Eventually the steel reached Dawson and I was one of the hundreds who at least **heard** the last spike being driven. I was also at Pouce Coupe station when the first passenger train pulled in. My friend Archie got himself a grubstake and headed for his homestead in the Sunset Prairie district. He almost talked me into cancelling and taking over an unimproved quarter next to him but at that time I wasn't quite ready to settle down. On looking back, we often wonder how things would have turned out had we followed a different course of action. When I returned to this country in 1947, I discovered that Archie had died at quite an early age in a hospital near Edmonton.

With the completion of the railway, the employment situation was pretty grim in the fall of 1930. There had been high hopes that this line would eventually be pushed through for a coast outlet but there was going to be a long wait for this. In the meantime a friend and I got jobs with Frank Murphy, a carpenter who had bought lots and made a deal with Frontier Lumber to supply the necessary material for two 2-bedroom houses. Our first job was digging a 10'x10' cellar four feet deep through two feet of frost with pick and shovel. I remember it took 3 days and cost the boss \$12.00 — we got \$2.00 a day, out of which we paid for our meals at the cafe and had approximately 75 cents left. Luckily we didn't smoke at that time! The weather stayed mild on through December and we dug the second hole, finished the cement work and closed in the first house. Before spring we even got to do some finishing work on cupboards. Murphy took some big chances!

Early in the spring an uncle of mine from Calgary came up with his carpenter tools hoping for work. He had worked faithfully for that city since coming there from Orkney in 1913, and being close to retiring age he had been conveniently included in one of the big layoffs that summer of 1930. As prospects for any work in the Peace were nil, he persuaded me I'd stand a better chance in Calgary as I had had some experience in clerking back home. To make a long story short, he returned to Calgary, and after collecting what wages I had coming, I followed in a few weeks, around May 1st, 1931 and never got back to the Peace River country again until 1946.

I was lucky to get a part-time job with a grocery chain store — \$5.00 for Friday and Saturday, often

delivering groceries by truck until midnight. Later on I was promoted to full time in one of their 8 stores at \$10.00 a week. I was even luckier to be able to have board and room with my aunt for \$7.00 a week. They had a large house and kept three other boarders besides my cousins. City life was quite a change for me and I really enjoyed getting out on car trips, especially the odd time up through the Banff area. I also learned to drive the car.

I should mention here about the time we experienced being held up by a gun-man who walked into the store on a Friday just before closing time. He picked up a few groceries and holding the gun underneath informed Fred McVeigh, the manager, this was a hold-up. When Fred asked "Are you kidding Mister?" he snapped open his gun, showed the shells and Fred decided it was too late in the day to be a hero and handed over the cash. The first thing we knew about it was Fred heading for the phone and we caught a glimpse of the get-a-way car disappearing around the corner. This was the third hold-up in about as many weeks and I believe it was on the next attempt that the boy and his sister got caught when involved in a car accident after a fur store hold-up. It turned out that their mother was the "brains" of the whole operation. I forget what conviction they received.

I stayed with the store until there was an opportunity to get back to farm work, working the harvest of '32 for Jim Shearer, another Orkney man who farmed in the Orkney district west of Red Deer River from Morrin. He had a really bumper crop in '32, badly lodged and some fields had to be cut one way with the binders. Yields were excellent; one field of wheat went over 60 bushels but only worth 19 cents a bushel. The going wage was \$1.50 for stooking and \$2.00 for threshing, per day not per hour! After we got through, I helped finishing up for our neighbor, P. J. Rock who was also a well known Registered Seed Grower. We did manage to finish before freeze-up, including a root-cellar full of certified seed potatoes which had to be picked over and graded before spring. Decisions, decision, sackfuls of decisions!

During that winter I got initiated into the tricks of picking over seed samples for the Seed Fairs at Calgary and Edmonton. The Shearer family won several ribbons at these fairs, including first in flax and brome, also in some varieties of potatoes.

Climatically, the winter proved to be quite mild and we were able to get around by car. We got our mail in Morrin and I well remember Jim and I making the first trip with his Model A across on the thin ice after the ferry was taken out. We broke through on the far edge but managed to scratch our way up the bank. On the return trip we spent about two hours with jack, poles and chains getting the car back up on firmer ice. I happened to be at the wheel when we finally made it and I gave that Model A every encouragement I could think of, with the ice cracking all the way over! Later on in the season when the ice was around 2 feet thick I found out all about cutting the ice supply for next summer, and we did it the hard way with a 6-foot ice saw, crow bar and tongs. Working with the neighbors, it was an enjoyable outing, although a lot of heaving



and grunting was involved before about six big sleigh loads were hauled up the hill and packed away in a cool-stack.

An incident occurred on one of these outings that could have had a tragic instead of comic ending. It seems that there was danger of the saw following one of the men, who had fallen into the deep water. Another character realizing that the saw would sink and the man should float or hang on for a few minutes, immediately sounded the alarm at the top of his voice, "Save the saw!" I never did hear how that fellow got dried off but understand it was "business as usual" after all the excitement had died down.

Spring eventually arrived, and as Jim was laid up with a tricky knee I had to find out suddenly how to run a Wallis tractor and to do the seeding. Most of the summerfallowing was done with horses on cultivator and rod-weeder and compared to 1932 it was a light crop. There was also quite a smattering of hail in the district during the harvest season — I remember taking shelter inside a big stook, probably around the first of September 1933.

The monotony of farm life was broken by school dances and by concerts in all the local schools before the Christmas holidays. Speaking of breaking the monotony, for the past year, Mabel Pollitt, a girl from Lincoln, England and I had been, shall we say, keeping company. She was staying with her uncle and aunt, the Tom Palletts and we met when she came over to help Mrs. Shearer during threshing time. Sometime after harvest we decided to put this "two can live cheaper than one" theory to the test and set the date for December 21, 1933. At the time, we little realized how often we would be reminded December 21st was the shortest day of the year.

A Rev. H. Macdonald from Munson went to a lot of trouble hiring a team and cutter to come across the river to perform the ceremony at the Pallett farm house that afternoon and the weather man celebrated the occasion by whipping up the "grand-daddy" of all blizzards that evening, resulting in most of our guests having to spend the night and following day with us. Mabel's cousin Isabel and my friend Fred McVeigh "stood-up" for us and in these days we didn't monkey around with rehearsals; we played it by ear, and got away with it!

After spending the rest of the winter with the Shearer's, we moved to the Harvey McGhee place in the Orkney district, where Mabel had worked in 1933. It was the following spring, 1935 that we went to work for Magnus Johnston and remained with him until November, 1941 when I "joined up" in Calgary.

I remember during this period we got hailed several times — 1934 at McGhee's and 1937, a 100 per cent wipe-out for most of the district around Orkney. I got a job harvesting with Sutherlands, who had escaped the worst of the storm. Then by 1939 I was renting a quarter across the road from Fred Plant. A July 7 storm pounded the crop badly but a second growth came back and made a late crop of No. 5 wheat.

Before joining the army November 1941, we had a family of 2 boys — Donald in '35 and Brian in '40 and

Mabel stayed on there, keeping house for Magnus, until I came back just in time for Christmas, 1945.

The following spring we accepted Magnus's offer to rent the section for that year. It was good to be back on the land. I spent a lot of time on the tractor, ending up with quite a good crop.

The possibility of buying land through the V.L.A. in that area didn't seem very promising, therefore I had got in touch with George O'Brien, Regional Field Officer for V.L.A. in the Beaverlodge area. We had enlisted the same time in Calgary and at his suggestion, I took the train up there and drove around with him for a few days. After looking at one or two places, the N½ 33-72-10-6 came up for sale and eventually the "King" and I came to an agreement on the purchase.

At this time the Alaska Highway went past the place, just two miles from Albright Store, post office and elevator. Later I learned I was the fourth owner. The original homesteaders were Alex Devitt on the NW and Tommy Black on the NE. Both quarters were taken over by Geoffrey Barnsley and Ivor Guest, and later by John Dunsfield with whom the V.L.A. dealt on my behalf. Mr. Dunfield had rented the farm out for some time before selling, some of the operators being his son-in-law, the late Joe Chabot, Nowoczin Brothers and the late Lorne Kerr. But I'm getting way ahead of my story.

During the spring of 1947 through auction sales and private purchase we acquired enough worldly possessions to get by with, enough to fill a truck and a boxcar. We had no livestock but almost everything else, including a piano, a 15-30 tractor and an old Star car piled and braced in that boxcar.

The next day, with our truck loaded with immediate necessities, even the canary, and with us four in the cab, we headed north, staying in Edmonton overnight. The following day we had several delays with traffic being held up on icy hills — mostly U.S. army vehicles whose drivers apparently had little experience with such conditions. However we got to Kinuso and stayed there that night. There we got acquainted with a fellow-traveller who turned out to be our new neighbor, Lorne Kerr, returning from a trip down South. When we got to High Prairie the next day, we found out that the ice was going out on all the river crossings but were told it might be possible to get loaded on a flat-car for Watino. At Girouxville, Lorne and I managed to book a car and fortunately had enough chains and blocks to snug his car and our truck good and solid and were all set to ride over in our vehicles, but "no dice." We had to move into an old passenger car and buy tickets like about 20 others, mostly U.S. people. We got moving at 5 p.m. and made the crossing in short order, hoping to be the first unloaded and be on our way. It seemed they started at the wrong end and we were last to get up to the platform. Other drivers coming from the other direction were loading their vehicles as ours came off and they told of terrible travelling conditions — said we'd never make it up the riverhill. While all this was going on I had made arrangements with some kind people on a nearby farm to bed down Mabel and the

boys for the night. When we finally got unloaded about 1 a.m. there was a slight skin of frost over the mud. We decided to head out right away. The rest of the family weren't too enthusiastic about the idea of being routed out of bed at that time of night, however everybody was thankful to get up that river hill. There were no track or ruts; the road looked and felt like a field of breaking! To relieve "pressure" in the cab, Brian rode with Lorne in the car and before we got to Rycroft we had several stops where the water was across the road and the several sets of ruts had to be tested for depth and the shallowest selected.

There was no-one around the hotel when we reached Rycroft about 3:30 a.m. so Lorne went up one side of the hallway and down the other trying doors until he found two empty rooms and moved in. After an enjoyable breakfast in Rycroft Hotel kitchen, we got as far as Grande Prairie before the frost went out, but from there to Beaverlodge we encountered lots of mud and water, arriving late afternoon Easter Sunday.

We were still seven miles from "home", but found that the last few miles was in terrible shape so we stayed put for the night. Along with George O'Brien, we made it out in the morning and found the wooden culvert had been ripped out last fall during road repairs and there was no crossing into the farm.

Our box-car hadn't come in yet, so after visiting with one of our new neighbors, Jim Eastman, arrangements were made that we could stay at his place until we got settled. Before we finally did get settled, we found out we had landed in the middle of the best neighbors you could wish for. They helped us unload and store our stuff, assemble machinery, get seed cleaned, saw firewood and eventually straighten up the old log house and make it habitable, not to mention many other kindnesses. It was towards the end of June when we moved on to the farm, living in the garage until the house was completed.

That first summer stayed dry in our area until about mid-July and then the rains came, resulting in a lot of second growth which didn't quite make it before an early snow and frost August 15th.

I got a job that summer field inspecting for the Department of Agriculture and this lasted on through harvest. I was lucky to be kept on for seed inspection that winter, travelling all the way from British Columbia to High Prairie on the job.

The boys seemed to like school here at North Beaverlodge, having the benefit of six teachers before centralization and bussing to Beaverlodge. I believe it was March 21, 1951 when, without any radio warning a strong wind whipped in a bad blizzard from the north, piling up drifts. We had no phones yet so just hoped the kids got in somewhere to ride out the storm. It was an anxious night but they pulled in before noon next day with the team and sleigh, having stayed at the Albright Store with Len and Margaret Jones and family.

In the 25 years we've spent here in the Albright district, that first crop was the worst. Since then we have had some good crops and the odd setback with hail, but over the years it could have been worse. Starting in 1947 I've worked out at other jobs during the winter almost every year, mostly on P.F.A.

inspection and the last 10 years in its Grande Prairie office. Until 1957 we always kept 3 or 4 cows, raised a few cattle and hogs but then we bought a house and lot in Beaverlodge. Mabel worked in the Hospital while Brian was going through high school and we'd move back to the farm for summer.

Then in 1964 a plan for a modern home on the farm came into being and two years later an added attraction — natural gas was installed.

Both our boys are married now: Don to Verna, daughter of Bob and Muriel Clarke of Edmonton and they have three boys and one girl — Dwayne, Bob, Diana and Dannie. They live in Dawson Creek where Don drives for Canadian Freightways.

Brian married Melba, daughter of Mel and Isabel Ray of Beaverlodge and they live in Edmonton with their family of two boys, Scott and Lee, and one girl, Marde. Brian is a chartered accountant working with Campbell Furniture.

We still take an interest in community affairs having been connected with school board, telephone, farmer organizations and church since we came.

Mabel is often called on as one of the organists for Beaverlodge United Church of which we are members.

As long as the "old constitutions" hold out, we hope to stay on the farm for a few years yet. If we don't, who's going to feed all these chickadees and woodpeckers next winter? And in the summer the robins like to have somebody around to sing at!

#### **ROBERT AND ETTA PETERS**

Robert and Etta Peters came from Maple Creek, Saskatchewan about 1931 to the North Beaverlodge district. They stayed with the Gordon Cook family for a while until they got their house built. Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Cook are cousins.

Robert Peters was a carpenter by trade, Etta had been a school teacher in her younger years. She was a very good public speaker and was very good at helping out at the Literaries, Ladies Aid doings and different doings at the Albright Hall.

The Peters had a sale and left in 1944 for Vancouver. Robert died many years ago. He had poor health for years. Etta is in a Senior Citizen Home at New Westminster, B.C. She is well into her 80's.

They had one son, Orval who lives in Gunn, Alberta.

#### **AUSTIN RISBO**

Austin Risbo lived on the SW 25-72-10, the present Clarence Nelson farm. He was a bachelor and broke only five acres of his farm. He was a carpenter by trade and assisted in building the former office on the Experimental Farm. His tool box remained there for several years.

According to reports, in 1929 he went to Finlay Forks to pan gold.

#### **THE ROBSON STORY — by Kathleen Tveiten**

Mother was born in Liverpool of a professional family. Her father was an architect and some aunts were teachers. Dad was a Yorkshireman, of a farming family of 13 children. He apprenticed in the grocery trade and became manager of a large shop in Manchester. There he met Mother.



In 1913 the family moved to Saskatchewan, with dad in the grocery business for a time but mother found the winters severe. Dad had heard about the famous Peace country so came here in 1917 and some of the family followed in 1918. My sister Nellie was then at University and Bert was in a bank. Leslie tried farming but gave it up. I was attending high school at this time at Grande Prairie and the family did not move onto the homestead until my graduation. Later, in 1925, I entered Camrose for teacher training. My first school was Gimle and I can still see Johnny Martin and Johnstone Fair dancing a jig at the Christmas concert. When the railroad was being built to Hythe, I was at North Beaverlodge School and Dorothy, Murray and William Lay would keep us informed of its progress.

Dad cleared his first 100 acres by hand and his first crop, in 1930, was registered oats. It was a good stand and the grain was sacked and sealed, only to be sold at the elevator for 23 cents when the depression hit. Dad hauled water from the Agnew well, a mile and a half away until we could get one drilled in 1927. Ice was stored for summer use and the winter visit of the wood sawyers was looked forward to. The first grain was marketed in Wembley but eventually we got an elevator at Albright, nearer home.

We lost mother in 1933 so dad and I carried on through the Depression. I stopped teaching that year but was persuaded to start again as so many teachers had joined up. I carried on until I married Knut Tveiten in 1949. The next year dad married Mrs.



After the wedding of Nellie Robson and Charlie Healing, in front of Robson's original log house with sod roof. Back row: Bert Robson, Kath Robson, Charlie Healing. Middle row: Mrs. Robson, Nellie Robson, R. C. Robson. Front row: Con Fisher, Leslie Robson, Mrs. W. D. Hurley and Mrs. J. L. Kewley, right.



R. C. Robson going out to plow.

Maude Pearson and had 14 happy years until his death in 1964, age 89.

Knut and I have an adopted daughter, Dorothy. She is now grown up and married and lives near us.

Yes, we live in the same log house but times have changed. We enjoy electricity, gas, plumbing, colored TV and a paved highway, but we were just as happy 50 years ago on the homestead.

#### DR. SCOTT

Dr. and Mrs. Scott came in 1917 to North Beaverlodge district with his brother-in-law, Percy Lee. They were from North Dakota, County of Walhalla and were friends of the William Hurleys from the same area. The Scotts found life difficult here, apart from the hardships of homesteading. People were not inclined to trust Dr. Scott, trained in medicine in the U.S., as a medical man because he was homesteading.

Mrs. Scott was a very talented musician and often played for dances at the Happy Valley School. Too she was an excellent speaker.

In 1921 the Scotts and Lees had a sale after which they moved to Walla Walla, Washington.

#### CHARLIE STEPHENS

It is difficult to classify Charlie. He was extremely light hearted and in an instant could swing into a barrack-room ballad with a Cockney air. He served for 19 years in the First Gloucester Regiment, 12 years on duty in India. He played trumpet in the Regimental Band and was for a time a flying tackle in the Tottenham Spurs football team. He was an accomplished barber and knitted sweaters for a pastime.

Charlie was a member of the Old Comtempibles. He was in regular training at Aldershot in 1914 and went overseas with the 1st Division of the Imperial Forces on August 9, 1914. On the eleventh hour of Armistice Day Sergeant Stephens was in charge of No. 9 Platoon of "C" Company "First" Gloucester Regiment in the trenches 8 miles north of Mons.

Charlie came to Canada in 1922 and for several years was foreman at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm. Following this he set up a barber shop in Hythe and in Pouce Coupe. He suffered major surgery for a stomach ailment but this did not affect his cheery disposition.

Charlie married Annie Karley of River Hebert, Nova Scotia. His son Charles lives in Nova Scotia. The three other children live in British Columbia, all are married.

#### GRANNY STEPHENS — by Lucy Hodges

William and Julia Gertrude Stephens were busy people on their market garden near Ledbury, Herefordshire, England. Besides growing vegetables on their 4½ acre holding they contracted the picking of apples and cherries on neighboring farms, for sale in Gloucester and Leeds. William also planted 70 apple trees but before they matured he died in 1917. On his advice Julia emigrated to Canada in 1920 with her son Ernest and three daughters, Edith, Lucy and Gertrude (Gertie.)

They came directly to North Beaverlodge, where

two other sons, Percy and Leonard had homesteaded in 1913 and 1915, respectively with two neighbor boys, William and Ven Hodges. The eldest son, Charles came over in 1922. Percy and Leonard Stephens and Ven and Bill Hodges had been pals in England.

Granny Stephens homesteaded the present Jim Eastman farm. Her sons helped her prove it up. She never lived on her farm but with one of the family. She did a great deal of home nursing, mostly on maternity cases. She went when called on, whether in sunshine or rain. Dr. A. M. Carlisle praised her nursing efforts highly.

She died in 1946. In tribute Rev. Harold McSherry recalled that in the early days she was the Florence Nightingale of the district.

#### **ERNEST STEPHENS — By Lucy Hodges and Gertie Dick**

Ernest Stephens, second son of William and Gertrude Stephens worked as a signal man on the railway in Wales. Here he passed his St. John's Ambulance tests.

In 1915 he joined the British Imperial Army where he became a sergeant in the machine corps. He served both in France and Greece. In the fall of 1916 he was wounded and returned to hospital in England. On returning to France he served as an orderly in a front line hospital.

In 1920 he came to Canada where he homesteaded in the Gimle district. He built his house on his soldier grant where he and his mother lived. They always had a wonderful garden. He was Uncle Ernie to many of the children in the neighborhood and a good neighbor. He never married.

After selling his farm he moved to Beaverlodge where he passed away in 1966.

#### **LEONARD STEPHENS**

Leonard Stephens was born in Worcestershire, England. He worked in coal mines in Wales. In February 1914 he emigrated to Canada and worked on farms in Saskatchewan. When he heard about the Peace River country he travelled to Edmonton. There, he, his brother Percy and friends Ben and Will Hodges bought farming machinery and horses. They travelled by train in 1915 to Pruden's Crossing, the end of the steel and drove from the Smoky to Beaverlodge where they had filed on land earlier that year. Leonard stayed on his homestead and on Percy's, so that each one could "prove up", carrying on while the latter was overseas. Leonard had the ability to write light verse and often helped at entertainments in local schools in the early days.

In 1922 he and Sam Timmins went north to trap. Tragedy overtook them. Leonard's remains were returned and interred in the Riverside cemetery. The R.C.M.P. officer who went north to investigate this incident had been a friend of Leonard as a young man in England.

#### **THE PERCY STEPHENS STORY — by M. Joan Zimmerman**

Percy Edwin Stephens was born at Red Marley, Worcestershire County, England on January 20, 1893.

His father owned and operated a fruit farm there. At the tender age of 13, Percy's father removed him from grade school to help operate the farm. The laws of England at that time allowed such practice and since only the wealthy could afford to educate their children, removing children from school at 13 years of age was common. Percy was one of seven living children to be supported by his father on the small income of an orchard.

To obtain a trade during this era, parents were expected to pay the tradesman for the training of the apprentice. The apprentice received his trade and free lodging at the home of the tradesman. He received no wage and unless his employer so desired, no spending money. Of course, having a large dependent family, Percy's parents were unable to afford this luxury for their children.

The future of the boys was to work at menial tasks for someone else for the remainder of their years, never bettering their status, if they remained in England. The girls could also foresee toiling for others until marriage separated them from these labors.

At the ripe old age of 19, Percy decided to head for greener pastures. He and a friend, William Hodges discussed at length their passions for adventure. Percy had his eye on the much discussed Australia, while Will wanted to journey to the new colony, Canada, where homestead grants could be picked up very cheaply in the West. The discussion as to the direction to take was decided by the flip of a coin and Percy lost. Canada was their destination.

Having had no paying occupation while working on the family orchard, Percy requested passage money to Canada from his parents. This idea was refused as neither parent wanted their son to travel such a great distance away from them, especially not to such a desolate, wild country like Canada, nor could they afford Percy this contribution. On the other hand, Will had been working and having saved some money was able to lend Percy his passage money.

Upon reaching the new Canadian shores in the year 1912 both Will and Percy worked their way westward on various farms in Ontario and Saskatchewan while looking over the land for a homestead to settle on.



Percy Stephens, just before leaving England. Age 19.



Finally they decided on the newly opened Peace River country. Having obtained enough money to repay Will's loan, secure a "grubstake", some small machinery and a team of horses, Percy and Will arrived in Edmonton. Here they obtained their supplies and leased a boxcar in order to travel to the end of the steel or railroad line which was then Smith, Alberta.

While waiting for the train to leave the Edmonton station, they happened to meet a hungry, forlorn chap who appearing penniless was looking for a way to get to Smith. Understanding the predicament of being destitute and finding the man friendly and compatible, Percy and Will offered him a ride in their boxcar. They shared their food and even a bottle of rum with the fellow during the journey. The destination of Smith was reached in the middle of the night while all were sleeping. The next morning Percy and Will awoke to the smell of bacon and eggs and coffee. Imagine their surprise at their penniless travelling companion able to provide such a banquet. Meanwhile the R.C.M.P. were combing the boxcars in search of whiskey going through contents such as flour and sugar sacks with large bayonets. Beyond Smith was Indian Territory and no alcohol could be taken into it to be sold to the Indians, although enough for personal medicinal purposes was allowed the settlers. Our daring friend told Percy and Will that during the night, friends of his had removed a load of whiskey from a false bottom in their boxcar and were now well into the Peace Country with it. Percy and Will were angry and shocked as had the whiskey been discovered in their car, they could have been jailed or deported. This fellow turned out to be the notorious Peace River country bootlegger "Baldy Red". They never did know his real name.

From Smith, Percy and Will travelled by team and wagon over the trail to the Grande Prairie area. At that time there was a trading post and post office at Lake Saskatoon which was then called Beaver Lodge. From this location they set off with a shovel. They would turn over the virgin land and examine it for productiveness. In the spring of 1913, Will chose a quarter of land in the Beaverlodge district which is now occupied by his daughter and her husband, Betty and Albert Clease. Percy chose a quarter in the Albright district which was later bought from him and is still owned by Bert Cunningham. Both men worked together to clear their land. A few years later, Will's brother Ven Hodges and Percy's brother Leonard also arrived to take up homestead land.

1914 saw the outbreak of the First World War. Percy joined with the 49th battalion, an Edmonton regiment, and then was transferred to Moose Jaw for basic training. Will joined up at Moose Jaw and from that time until the end of the war the friends were separated.

Percy was shipped back to England, then to France where he saw action at both Passchendaele and Vimy Ridge. It was at Vimy Ridge that Percy was wounded and his army life came to an abrupt end. Percy spent many months convalescing in an army hospital in England. He returned once more to his homestead in the Peace River country.

Percy now chose a new location as a Soldier Settlement Grant, along the west side of the Beaverlodge River. This land is presently owned by George Adams. Percy's father had died during the war, so now Percy's mother, brother Ernest, and three sisters, Edith, Lucy and Gertie decided to leave England and come out to the Peace Country to be with their family. Percy's older brother, Charlie, a married man with a family decided to try his luck in this new land. They lived with Leonard on his homestead, later owned by Bill Halstead. Percy and Leonard worked together raising a cattle herd. Percy's new soldier Grant provided a year round water supply for the cattle; therefore it was decided to move onto it. Here they erected a frame structure to house the family, however, Leonard was killed before the move. Leonard and a friend Sammy Timmins went north trapping. They did not return and finally the family contacted the R.C.M.P. Upon investigation the R.C.M.P. found the bones of these two men with a bullet hole in the back of each skull. The remains of both men were returned to the family and were buried in the Albright cemetery.

Percy, Ernie, his mother and sister moved to Percy's Soldier grant where they resided together until Edith married Will Hodges, Lucy married Ven Hodges, and Gertie married Frank Dick.

Percy now met the new North Beaverlodge school teacher, Miss Hilda Florence Johnstone, who was boarding with his sister, Mrs. Ven Hodges. After a lengthy courtship, Hilda left the district and took various teaching positions, the last at Roselea school in the Barrhead school district. She and Percy still continued to correspond and in 1928 they were married in Edmonton.



Percy and Hilda when they were courting.

Hilda was a native Nova Scotian whose father was a ship's captain and whose mother's family owned ships and a shipyard near Halifax. At an early age, her parents with their two children, Hilda and Clarence, made the tremendous move to Vancouver. Here her father fell from a ship's mast, was hurt and eventually died. Her mother turned their home into a boarding house, as well as working in the Vancouver General Hospital, to support her two children. Hilda obtained her teacher training at the University of British Columbia and accepted a position with the North Beaverlodge School District, which led to meeting Percy Stephens.

Percy and Hilda were able to return to the Peace River Country by train which now carried them as far as Wembley. They resided on Percy's soldier grant, consequently, Ernie and Granny Stephens moved to Ernie's land, two miles west of Percy's. Ernie's land is now owned by Sam Larson. Percy then sold his homestead to Bert Cunningham and bought a quarter of land on the east side of the river from Bud Lay. Later he purchased two quarters to the south on both sides of the river to make his property a square block.

Hilda's mother, Mrs. Isabella Johnstone, came to live with Percy and Hilda, and was thrilled with the arrival of a baby granddaughter in May of 1929. This new-comer was named Patricia May.

The 1930's saw the great Depression hit. Percy had a large herd of cattle by this time. He had refused to sell his steers in the spring of 1929, because the price was too low. He kept them until fall and found he would suffer a loss after paying for the freight to have them shipped to market. Needless to say, the family ate fresh meat for some time.

During this long struggle the Stephens had another daughter born in October, 1935. Hilda's mother had passed away that summer so the new arrival, Marion Isabelle was named after her. The following year, January 1937 saw the arrival of the youngest daughter, Margaret Joan, to complete Percy's family.

The river was a big burden during the spring breakup before the bridge was built on Percy's land in 1941. There was a bridge two miles south of Percy's but it meant a lengthy drive to Beaverlodge instead of the three and half miles when the river could be crossed. One incident Percy told about was crossing on the ice in the morning, and upon his return home the ice had broken up. Much to Hilda's horror, Percy would not go back around by the bridge, but leaped from ice cake to ice cake to cross the river.

During the spring flood, Percy would chain the wagon box to the wagon's axle to cross the river at the rapids. With Hilda and the girls clinging to the box, Percy would encourage the horses to swim the rapids, while the tarred box caused the wheels and box to float.

Drinking water was another headache. Percy had a spring in the river flats, from which he hauled water in barrels to the house. In icy weather, the horses slipped, the barrels turned over and Percy would have to go back for more. In 1940 a well was drilled beside his house. It was an artesian well, which is still flowing.

Percy and Will bought an army barracks from the government after the Second World War, when the United States army closed down their premises at Dawson Creek. They dismantled the barracks to bring back the panels. Percy used his share to build an addition to the original frame house.

Percy's daughters all received their primary, secondary and high school education in the old brick school house in Beaverlodge, which was torn down some years ago. Their transportation to school was by horseback, and walking during the spring and fall, due to the poor road conditions. Percy spent many cold winter days taking his girls to and from school with a

team and sleigh. Ironically, enough, the summer after his youngest daughter graduated in 1955, a good market road was built running right beside his land and a school bus operated on it.

Percy's wife Hilda took sick in September of 1955. After spending two months in the Beaverlodge Hospital, she was taken to the University Hospital in Edmonton. Here it was discovered she had cancer of the liver, from which she died on November 19, 1955.

Percy then sold his farm to George Adams. He reserved 20 acres on which he built a small home for himself. In 1960 Percy married Millicent Cavett, whose husband had taught both Marion and Joan in Junior High School. After 11 years of contentment, it was discovered that Mill had cancer. Consequently she lived the rest of her days in the Beaverlodge Hospital. Percy, now 76 years old, became ill and following a gall bladder operation suffered a stroke. He lived for a month; however he needed constant care during this period. Men belonging to the Legion and Masonic Lodge helped the family sit with him until his death on the eighth of October 1970. Mill lived until the twenty-third of December 1970.

Patsy took her registered nurse's training at the Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton. She married Leonard Black and resides in Edmonton. She has three boys, Robert, Wilfred, and Thomas. Marion took stenographer's training at Alberta College in Edmonton. She worked in Barrhead and the Edmonton Cancer Clinic for a number of years and then financed herself through a psychiatric nurse's training at Essondale, B.C. She married Bill Normey, and with their only child, Wendy they reside at Vernon. Joan received her teacher education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. She married John Zimmerman and they and their two boys Steve and Brent reside in Grande Prairie.

#### RAY STEWART

I came to the Peace River in June 1927 and bought a quarter of land from Rex Ireland, the southeast 87-72-9, three miles east of Beaverlodge. I went back to

Ray and Wilma Stewart.





Saskatchewan in the spring of 1928 and brought a load of horses and machinery, bought a quarter across the road and farmed there till 1947. I married Wilma Harrop in 1937 and we raised five girls and one boy. We sold out in 1947 and bought a brush cutting outfit. We sold that and bought three quarters in the Albright district. Now we have sold most of this land and live on a few acres on the N.W. 20-72-10. That's the old Jergen Johnson farm. The family have long since left. Joe is in Prince George, Dorothy in Red Deer, Mary in Montreal, Margaret is in Peace River, Joan at Sexsmith, and Cecilia at Beaverlodge. We have seen hard times over the years, but have never been sorry for coming to Beaverlodge and never intend to move any place else.

### STUBBS BROTHERS

In 1918 William and James Stubbs left Bolton, Ontario just north of Toronto to farm in Drinkwater, Saskatchewan. It was a dry, treeless part of the Regina Plains named after a railroad official and not because of a favorable water situation. In 1928 they came to Beaverlodge and bought the Peterson section. Next spring they moved in with four carloads of settlers' effects.

They were pleased with prospects as the country offered wild fruit, abundant firewood, plenty of gravel for building, abundant water and had a good climate. The tree growth was new to them and they set out vigorously to clear the land. Unfortunately they cut the stumps too high and had to re-do the work so that the tractor could make headway.

The farm was considered rocky and unproductive in some quarters but Will and James worked diligently so that when they took off their first crop of 9200 bushels of wheat and 3000 bushels of oats from their initial 140 acres of breaking, it was rated the best crop in the district. Later when it was sold to Peter Harris, it produced a \$50,000.00 crop of fescue seed, so the neighbors began to cast covetous eyes on the farm.

Jim married Emily Hilliard of Nobleton, Ontario. The farm was sold in 1949 and Emily died in 1950, Jim in 1960. Will never married and he died in 1957. Emily and Jim had two children. Norman married Blanche Foust of Demmitt, the first marriage of that district. Dora married Walter Dyrkach. Both Jim and Will played the auto harp at the local concerts and Jim sang to his own accompaniment. Their 1929 John Deere tractor, on steel and bought from Allen and Davis, is now in the South Peace Centennial Museum

### CHARLES R. SUTHERLAND — as told to Audrey Lowe

I was born October 5, 1897 in Chatfield, North Dakota and spent some time in Minnesota before heading north to Canada. I arrived in Beaverlodge, June 3rd, 1919 with my dad Charles E. and my brother Ivan. We settled at Hay Lake, 5 miles north of the Old Town of Beaverlodge. I spent about four summers working around Lake Saskatoon. In 1920 I hauled a pool table and fixtures from Grande Prairie for the new pool hall at the G.W.V. Hall that replaced the one that burned down. The pool hall today is the United Church in Wembley.



Charles Sutherland outfit sawing wood for Bert Cunningham in 1930.

On January 28, 1929 in Edmonton I married Mary Gordon, who was born in Midmar, Aberdeenshire, Scotland and had come over in 1927. Ivan was married to Lily May Davis in 1930 and continued to farm his place on Hay Lake till his health forced him to retire in 1952. He died in '59 and May in '72.

In 1933 we pulled up stakes and homesteaded 9 miles south of the Wapiti. My dad lived with us till his death in 1935. In 1935 we bought a place closer to the South Wapiti school so our two daughters could attend. School wasn't held in the coldest winter months as the log school wasn't warm enough. For nearly 20 years we ran the Wapiti post office and I hauled the mail from Wembley for Pipestone Creek and Wapiti. We had to walk the ice in the river spring and fall. One morning I walked over on the ice but when I got back from Wembley with the mail and a few groceries the ice had gone out so had to use the row boat to get back to the truck on the other side.

In '69 we sold the farm and moved to our present home in Hythe. Our eldest daughter Audrey became Mrs. Joe Lowe of Beaverlodge, after teaching a term at North Beaverlodge. They have two children Lynnette and Charles (Chuck). Our youngest daughter Muriel (Mrs. James Olson) lives at Lacombe and they have two children, Bonnie and Garry.

### THE KNUT TVEITENS — by Kathleen Tveiten

Knut Tveiten was born in 1908 in Valle, Setesdal, Norway. His family had lived there for generations. He was 18 when he left Norway and came to this country. Knut worked around La Glace in the summers and at Lee Borden's lumber camps in winter. He bought Jimmy Gault's quarter in 1935 where he farmed, except for the war years when he was overseas, until we married.

I was born in Moss Side, Manchester, England in 1907. Dad, Robert Cooper Robson, came to Canada in 1913. The rest of us, mother, two older brothers, Les and Bert, an older sister, Nellie and I followed in 1914. We lived for a while in Battleford, Saskatchewan, another short while in Vancouver, then dad heard the call of the Peace. He came here in 1918 to scout around, and through friends, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hawthorne, found his hilltop that has been my home since coming here with Mother and Dad, and where Knut and I have lived since our marriage.

I taught in the old log country schools all around the farm — Gimle, North Beaverlodge and Glass Lake and in Hythe when the town was being built the year the railway was going through in 1929. When mother died in 1933, in the depression, I stayed home with dad. Teachers were very plentiful then until the war caused somewhat of a teacher shortage. So back I went to teach at Glass Lake, North Beaverlodge and Gimle, in turn.

I rode horseback to school when there was no snow, but when winter descended on us I skied. One day I was skiing happily along on a good track as we'd had no wind for several days, when I looked up and there about ten feet away stood a black bull. I abruptly changed my course, took a right angle turn into deep, loose snow, but a hundred yards or so farther on was able to return to my good track. I don't know whether the bull or I was more surprised. I do know who was more scared and I'm sure the bull shook his head and said to himself, "What an odd human being." I learned later he was apt to be a cross bull, so lucky me to be here writing this.

One spring, the last year I taught in a country school I buzzed off to Gimle on a motor scooter which generated some interest in the district.

After Knut and I were married I again stopped teaching. Six years later we adopted a little girl, Dorothy. When she started school in 1956, I once more returned to teaching in Hythe where I stayed until my retirement at sixty.

When Dorothy was twenty, she went her way. She married Ken Buckley in 1971. Then Knut and I decided to travel a bit. He had sold his farm and was carrying on with just this home place. So in 1972 we flew to Oslo. Knut's cousins met us. The little nine year old daughter of one cousin as we approached them curtsied and presented me with a beautiful bouquet. Then back over the mountains we went to Valle, Knut's birthplace, the most beautiful spot one could ever wish to see.

We stayed with the cousin who lives where Knut's old home, 400 years and more in age, is.

It was forty-five years since Knut had left home so he found his school pals somewhat changed, but one and all so glad to see us. How we enjoyed it all — the kindness of the people, the quiet beauty of the countryside with waterfalls hither and yon, and the peaceful "unhurriedness" of it all!

This year of 1973 we visited Britain, my birthplace, and experienced the same joy of living, so much so that we shall have to go back in 1975. In 1974 back to Norway we go — Happy anticipation!

#### **WILLIAM VALE**

William Vale was born in England. He came west about 1912 to Medicine Hat, where he stayed at a boarding house where Les Emes' father also boarded. He married Ada, the daughter of the operator of the boarding house, and went farming north of Medicine Hat. From there he went to Rimbey, and arrived in Beaverlodge in 1929 to take over the Percy Mercereaux farm.

Ada died about 1935 and was buried in the Riverside Cemetery. William remarried later. In 1939 he re-

turned to England to be with his sisters who operated a nursing home at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. He wrote back to Les Emes that he had good passage on the Atlantic and that no torpedoes were sighted!

#### **THE WESTLAKES**

Mr. and Mrs. Westlake homesteaded in the North Beaverlodge school district. She died about 1924 and was the first person to be buried in the Riverside cemetery. Mr. Westlake left this country shortly after.

#### **THE RUSSELL WRIGHT FAMILY**

Russell and Annie Wright moved to the Peace River country in December, 1928, coming from Wellwood, Manitoba. They had two children then and two more were born at Albright. Annie had two brothers and their families living around Spirit River, so the Wrights went there when they first arrived. The cattle, household furnishings and machinery were shipped to Wembley. Russell went to Beaverlodge with a real estate agent, Bert Watson, to look for land or a place to live for the winter and settled on the Pinky Newguard land at Albright. The livestock were unloaded at Wembley and driven on foot to Beaverlodge while the work train brought the two cars with machinery and household furnishings to Beaverlodge. An unloading ramp had to be built from railroad ties and the family got settled in their new home.

The family has always taken an active part in community affairs. Russell was secretary of the North Beaverlodge school a year or two. He was also secretary for the United Church at Albright for many years. Russell and Annie helped build the Albright Hall, Russell carpentering, and Annie helping to prepare the food to feed the men. Many good times have been had at the Albright Hall. Russell also served on the Hall Board in various offices. And later son Walter has also been on the Hall Board. Russell acted as Returning Officer for Provincial Elections for many years. Both Annie and Russell were active in the FUA. Walter is also active in Unifarm. Russell played ball with the Albright Men's Softball team. Annie belonged to various ladies' clubs such as the United Church W.A. and the Riverside Ladies' Aid and has baked many things to take to the hall for numerous social functions.

People worked hard to make a living in those pioneer days but they also had good times at Sunday picnics, school picnics, dances, Christmas concerts, card parties, etc. The Welcome Mat was always out at the Wright home and friends would gather around the piano for a sing song, have a bonfire and roast wieners, or spend an evening playing games. Crokinole and table tennis were favorite games. The old crokinole board is still in use and has helped to shorten many winters.

Russell passed away in October, 1970 and is buried in the Riverside cemetery. Annie still lives on the farm in the Albright district. Minnie is married to Walter Head and lives in Grande Prairie. She has five children, all of whom are married.

Mary is married to Chubb Fletcher and they live in Grande Prairie. They have three children, two of



whom are married and the youngest is going to school.  
Walter is married to Margaret Henderson and lives  
in Grande Prairie.

Leola is married to Arne Olson and lives in Calgary.  
They have no children.



Beaverlodge, 1931.



# APPLETON

The first settlers to the Beaverlodge Valley chose the open land on the eastern side of the river. The west side had more wooded stretches but by 1911 it began to fill up. Eventually there were enough children for a school.

From logs cut in the bush and hauled by homesteaders to a site donated by Mrs. Florence Foy on her scrip a log school was built by Jim Cory of Halcourt. The logs were hewn on both sides and the floor was of spruce lumber. The doubled boarded roof was supported by a log ridgepole and long log rafters. Homesteaders donated their help in building. Desks and seats were made and the heater was a barrel type.

John Appel, a local homesteader advanced the necessary money so the district was named "Appleton."

School opened in 1913 with Miss Margaret MacNaught as teacher and eight pupils — Edgar Appel, Edwin John, Scotty, Jack and Jean Ray, Helen and Mona Foy, and Euphemia MacNaught.

Other local teachers through the years were Mrs. Daisy Dixon, Newton Grimmett, Miss Alberta Elcome, Judd Perry, Miss Euphemia MacNaught and Mrs. Jean O'Brien.

In 1921 the school was moved two miles to the northwest. As several children drove to school a stable was built. A log ice house was filled with ice in winter and covered with sawdust. This was the school's water supply. The Willow Lodge I.O.D.E. assisted in the purchase of a piano.

Grades I-VIII were taught and at times as many as 35 pupils were in attendance, which made the school



Church at Appleton, later moved to Hythe.

very crowded. The highlights of the year were the picnics held by the Beaverlodge river at the end of the term and the Christmas concerts.

For a few years alternate Anglican and United Church services were held in the school by Rev. Harrison and Rev. Shields and for a time Sunday School preceded the services. Everyone attended and the school house would be filled.

A Community Club was organized, meeting every two weeks and provided entertainment such as short plays, recitations, debates and musical numbers. The men paid 10¢ each, all that they could afford during the dirty thirties, which bought the coffee and sugar. After lunch the desks would be set outside and there was dancing to the music of piano, violin, banjo and guitar. Jean O'Brien, Stanley McNeil, Andy Laing, Dorothy



Goodhand were among those who played. After dancing the place was well cleaned, the desks replaced and everything put shipshape.

A well was drilled and after the large school division was formed in 1941, a very good lumber building replaced the log school. The MacNaughts got the old building and moved it to their farm where it was used as a studio by Betty MacNaught and is still there.

The Appleton School has a proud record of achievement. Before the days of school busses or snow-plowed roads, many pupils went to high school in Beaverlodge — by saddle horse, bicycle, driving team and sometimes batching or boarding in town. So the old log school has helped its pupils along the way to take up such worthwhile callings as teachers, secretary, nurse, prominent farmer, seed inspector, provincial farm manager.



The Appleton School.



Going to church, 1919.



Appleton school district families, 1934.



Who said berry picking isn't fun?

#### THE ALLISONS

In 1918 the Allison family homesteaded in the Appleton district. David Neil Allison and his wife

Susan MacPhail were originally from Ontario. They came here from an Alberta town where Dave had a dray business.



At one time Dave went to the Klondike by way of the Athabasca and Mackenzie rivers and across the high divide.

For over 30 years he farmed here and became involved in all the farm and community activities of a new country. He served as the secretary-treasurer of the Appleton school district for many years. One year, when the crops were heavy and the harvest late he and John McNaught bought a threshing machine to ease the situation, and ran it for several years.

When the boys were older Dave had a sawmill on the Wapiti River south of Hinton Trail, which he operated in the winters. Mrs. Allison shared her time with him at the mill and with the boys on the farm.

They were good neighbours and loyal friends. Mrs. Allison was an active member of the I.O.D.E. and the W.M.S. She kept an attractive, hospitable home and spoke no ill of anyone.

There were three children in the family — MacPhail, Ruth and Hugh. They attended the Appleton school and the Beaverlodge High School. The boys helped with the farming for several years.

Mac finally went in for journalism, married and lived in Edmonton. He died in 1973.

After Ruth graduated from High school, she went to Victoria, B.C. for nurse's training and there married Stuart Irving, a member of the Air Force. When he went overseas, Ruth returned to her parents' home. In 1940 she died suddenly after a short illness in the Grande Prairie Hospital.

Hugh enlisted and went overseas and served in Italy. Dave died in 1952. Hugh and his mother farmed the home place for a few years, then Hugh worked at the Experimental Farm and they moved their house into town. Here they lived until her death in 1962.

Hugh has taken mechanics training and has papers as a steam engineer. At present he is employed at the Fairview Agricultural and Vocational College.

#### APPLETON BASKETBALL TEAM — Isabel Perry

The Appleton Basketball team had its beginnings in the summer of 1914. A site on the land later homesteaded by Jan Skulseg was chosen and a court marked out. The hoops were made by a local blacksmith and Arthur Chapman made the nets. When practicing started there was no shortage of players with homesteaders all around. Soon girls' rules seemed too restrictive and the number of players on a team stretched liberally. The practices became social gatherings with occasional bonfires, lunches and sing songs. When winter came the odd dance provided equipment and suits. The following year the Appleton team met the Beaverlodge girls several times with indifferent success but lots of fun.

Mary Ray, Ivy Chapman and Marion, Margaret and Isabel McNaught comprised the team at this time. Later Pearl Cleland joined and when they were big enough their younger sisters, — Jean, Betty, Reta and Edith and also Mary McNaught. Then came the Wartenbee girls and Ethel Lock.

Eventually they divided and Halcourt had their own team and Appleton practiced at their own school.

One time the Appleton girls planned on riding to the



The first players in the Appleton basketball team. Mary Ray (L), Ivy Chapman, Isabel, Margaret and Marion McNaught.



Appleton Women's Basketball team: Jean Lock, Betty McNaught, Edie Ray, Isabel McNaught, Mary Willis.

Fair at Lake Saskatoon where there were teams from Buffalo Lake and Hillhead competing. As some of their saddle horses could not be found that morning we phoned Beaverlodge and hired a car to take us. The prize money from the game and the race paid the taxi fee.

There were also many games with neighbouring teams, — Halcourt, Elmworth and Hinton Trail, at community picnics, garden parties and invitation meets.

With the fame of the Edmonton Grads, basketball became very popular throughout the country. A girl who had practiced against the Grads came to Grande Prairie and competition really started. So the Appleton team asked Gene Davis to coach them. One summer the prize money mounted up so we bought club rings which were worn with pride.

Once during a slack spell Frank Donald who owned the Grande Prairie theatre offered the team a free pass to the theatre if they would play an exhibition game with the Grande Prairie girls. It took a lot of cars to get us there and almost 40 people attended the show.

But times change. People come and go. Softball proved to be a better game for community gatherings, and basketball has become associated with the high school and colleges.



## JOHN APPEL

Mr. and Mrs. John Appel and son Edgar from South Dakota came in over the Edson Trail in November, 1911. John filed on a homestead and scrip. Mr. Appel helped to organize the Appleton school district and advanced the money necessary in building the first school. Consequently the Appleton School district was named after him. Edgar was one of the pupils when it opened in 1913.

After the land was proved up the Appel family returned to South Dakota. John Appel eventually retired to Santa Barbara, California, living to a ripe old age.

## CANTNELL AND MILLER BAGNELL

The Michael White land has been bought and sold several times. Two sons of William Johnson from Fairview farmed it for a while. Then Cantnell and Miller Bagnell from Westlock bought it around 1927. Their father had a large draying business in Edmonton and kept his sons supplied with beautiful horses whose feet would not stand the pavement but were fit for farm work. The Bagnells used both horses and tractors. They were successful farmers and good neighbors. They finally sold and returned to Westlock.

The brothers were good farmers and worked hard and diligently. However they liked to party at times and it was difficult for the neighbors to keep track of it all. One of the complexing factors was "Maggie" the housekeeper, who was an excellent cook and seamstress and a worthy participant in the parties. She was at her best though as a spectator to wrestling matches in Grande Prairie where she would threaten to enter the ring herself to do violence to the villain of the show.

Rowe Harris now farms the Bagnell land.

## JOHN BELL

John Bell filed on a homestead about a mile north-west of Grimmetts. He had come from England and kept in touch with a sister there.

He didn't farm very extensively. Part of the time he worked at the Experimental Farm. The Grimmetts put in the crop and helped him take it off. In return he did chores for them in winter.

He took part in community affairs, occasionally singing at a concert. Appleton residents will remember his rendition of Burlington Bertie From Bows.

After a few years John Bell left the country and went to Toronto.

## LEWIS BOLTON STORY — by Jean Borgedahl

Lewis Bolton, his wife Eva, oldest daughter Esther and brother-in-law Will Phylliare came to the Peace River country on August 13, 1925 from North Dakota. They came by rail to Wembley with their settlers effects, machinery, household goods and livestock. Esther rode in one cattle car while her father rode in the other. When they arrived in Edmonton it was discovered that Esther was not a man. She had dressed in coveralls and men's clothing as it was not permitted to carry a woman in a cattle car. She was put off the train and an engineer told her to go to the next stop and he would pick her up there. He did and she arrived in

Wembley. They unloaded in the bush which surely must have seemed dense bush after coming from the Prairies.

They herded the animals to the farm which is now owned by Jim Dyrkach. There was a log house there. Esther stayed there by herself with her dog and cattle while the men went back to Wembley for more things. Esther said she was never so scared in her life as she was sitting there by herself in the bush.

They lived there for a while, then Lewis bought the land west of Beaverlodge where he farmed until 1955. His wife Eva passed away in 1948 but he continued farming with the help of others for a few years.

I remember that they always had the most beautiful garden and raspberries. There were so many that after Esther canned enough for grandpa and grandma, Will Phyllaire and our family, over 100 quarts, there was a lot for others to pick.

Poor health forced Lewis off the farm in 1955 and he lived in Beaverlodge until he could not care for himself and he moved to the Pioneer Home in Grande Prairie where he enjoyed life so much that we could not get him to leave for a day. He passed away in 1970 at the age of 86.

The boys remained single. Jean married Elmer Lamare and lives in Edmonton. They have four children — Donald, Barbara, Joel and Christy.

Muriel married Clifford Claughton and lives at Winter, Saskatchewan. They have three sons — Ronald, Dennis and Ian.

## THE BRADSHAW

Wright Bradshaw was born in Prince Edward Island. In 1950 he came west to Veteran, Alberta, where he worked with his uncle for the summer. As the crops were snowed down that fall he worked in a lumber camp at Peers for two months then on to Beaverlodge to spend Christmas with his uncle, George Dawson.

He got a job at the Experimental Farm where he was employed for five years. During this time he met Margaret Lock of Two Rivers and they were married in 1955.

They returned to Veteran and farmed with his uncle for several years. Here a son, Edward, and a daughter Lois, were born. After returning to Beaverlodge Wright farmed with his father-in-law Arthur Lock for two summers, then bought a quarter of land from Mrs. Tyrrell and later the Ernie Dixon land. Here they made their home.

The Bradshaws live a busy and rewarding life. They both are members of Unifarm, and Margaret has helped with the 4-H Sewing Club. They are involved in church work, Wright on the Board of the United Church and Margaret as a Sunday School teacher. They also enjoy the Square Dancing club. Wright's mother has spent several summers with them. A year or so ago they all flew back to Prince Edward Island for a family reunion.

Eddie and Lois have attended school in Beaverlodge. Eddie is at present taking a building construction course at the Composite High School in Grande Prairie, where he enters Grade XII next term. Lois is in High School in Beaverlodge.

They have both taken part in the 4-H program. Eddie has a trophy for public speaking and also plays the guitar. Lois has two trophies for her work in the Beef Club. She also has a horse and is interested in riding.

#### **GEORGE BROOKS — by Isabel Perry**

George Miller Brooks came from Manitoba. Being a friend of the Fred Dixons, he filed on a quarter, partly lake, near them in June 1917. Here he built a cabin, Manitoba style, with vertical logs, in the trees near the water. He proved up and carried on a little farming and gardening. He enjoyed reading and had many friends in the community.

When he grew older, several neighbors invited him to build in their yard and leave his lonely cabin. Finally he had Mr. Mortwedt build him a house at Charles McNaught's. Here he lived and enjoyed independence until he died in September, 1934, at the age of 83.

He kept in touch with one relative, a niece in New York.



Celebrating George Brook's 80th birthday, 1933.

#### **GEORGE C. DAVIS**

George Courtney Davis, of Tynehead, B.C. was born in 1893. He came over the Edson Trail in 1912 and filed on a homestead near his sister and her husband, the Fred Dixons. He enlisted in the 66th Battalion in 1915 and went overseas in May 1916. George was an excellent rifle shot and was chosen to join the team to represent the 66th Battalion in any rifle competition. On May 23, 1916 he died of pneumonia and was buried at Shorncliffe, England.

#### **JOHN DEWAR**

John Dewar was born in Beaulieu, Scotland in 1885 and emigrated to Canada in 1909. He worked in Manitoba then heard of higher wages on the sheep ranches in Montana and Oregon. His brothers Murdo, Alex and Kenny joined him and they also worked on the ranches.

Later on John, brother Alex and Jim Mackintosh heard of the homestead land in the Peace River country and decided to head for Canada, their intention being to drive teams and wagons all the way. When they reached Swift Current they decided this mode of transportation would take too long so they loaded everything on railway cars and shipped to Edson. Here they were joined by cousins Tom Sinclair and Murdo McLennan and their trek over the Edson Trail began.

They arrived in the Beaverlodge area in July, 1914 and filed on their land. This accomplished, John again hit the trail back for Edmonton where he was re-united with his bride-to-be, Isabella Mackintosh, who had journeyed from Winnipeg to meet him. They were married in the city August 30, 1914 and soon left by team and wagon for their homestead some 300 miles away. This was quite a honeymoon for the young Scottish bride who had spent all her previous life in cities. They were accompanied by Isabella's father, James Mackintosh and arrived in September.

It had been previously arranged that John would go back to Edson to meet Isabella's two brothers, Dan and Dave so undaunted he started back over "The Trail" for the third time. This time he walked out taking one pack horse. It was late fall when the three got back to Beaverlodge so John and his bride spent the first part of the winter in a snug dug-out in a creek bank until their first house was completed.

The Dewars five children were born in their original log cabin. John Kenneth was born November 28, 1915. In 1916 times were hard, money was scarce and jobs almost non-existent in the area so John headed for Edmonton in search of work but the only job available was in the army. He enlisted in the Eleventh Pioneer Battalion C.E.F. and served until February 11, 1919. Upon discharge he took advantage of the loan to purchase livestock and equipment.

Mr. and Mrs. Dewar continued to farm until 1950 when they sold the farm to son Robert. They still resided on the farm until 1956 when they moved to the town of Beaverlodge.

John was always a community minded citizen. He served on the Appleton school board for several years and on the Beaverlodge Rural High school board for a time.

He also took an active part in the formation of the Beaverlodge Co-op store. John was a founding member of the Alberta Wheat Pool and a strong supporter of the U.F.A. movement. He was a life-time member of the Canadian Legion and took an active part in legion affairs.

John passed away in 1966 at the age of 81 and Mrs. Dewar followed in 1969, at the same age.

When the first son John (Bud) grew up he moved to Kinuso, on Slave Lake and went into the mink ranching business. He died in 1956 at the age of 40. He was married and had two sons.

The second child, Isobel has spent most of her life in the Beaverlodge area. She married James Harcourt who passed away in 1962. She has since remarried to Jim Nasedkin. There are four young Harcourts — two girls and two boys.

Agnes Margaret was born October 19, 1923. She married Carl Kolbo, resides in Seattle and has four children.

The youngest of the Dewar children was Mhaire Helen. While still in her early teens she moved to Edmonton to take secretarial training and has worked for the city of Edmonton ever since.

Robert James was born in 1921. Bob received his public school education at the old log Appleton school and attended high school in Beaverlodge. Bob then



stayed home to help on the farm and eventually took it over in 1950. Both father and son loved good horses and they raised and raced thoroughbreds on the tracks in the Peace River country. The interest in horses continued when Bob married Dorothy Edgerton, another horse-lover. The couple have two children, daughter Lorraine who is active in 4-H Horse Club and Horse shows in the Peace. Son Robbie's attention has turned to the skies and he plans to make flying his career.

Bob continues to farm the original farm, land which John broke with horses so many years ago and is still producing pedigreed seed.



First home of Mr. and Mrs. John Dewar, 1914.



John Dewar and Tom Sinclair in Edson, 1914.



Cutting grain with oxen on the Dewar farm.

Mrs. John Dewar and son John Kenneth.



Mrs. John Dewar and her four children. May 24, 1927. Team and wagon and racehorse, Nellie. 24th of May Sports.





Visiting—Sunday afternoon, Sam Doscuik, Urgl Carriere, Mrs. Carriere with baby John Dewar Jr., and Mrs. J. Dewar.

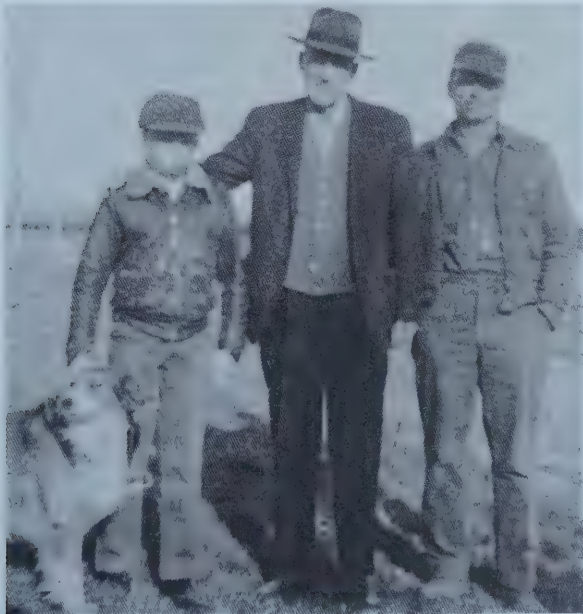
### MURDO DEWAR

Murdo Dewar was born in Inverness, Scotland August 29, 1891. He worked on sheep ranches in Montana for a time and on ranches in the Argentine for about a year. He came back to Montana and in 1916 to Beaverlodge via E.D. & B.C. to Spirit River.

Murdo enlisted in the 191st Battalion C.E.F. on the 23rd of December 1916. He served in France and was wounded and shell shocked. He was discharged February 20, 1919.

Murdo came back to the homestead and took SE 12-72-11 as a soldier grant and made his home on this quarter. He farmed this land until about 1940 when he sold out and worked for the U.S. Army in Dawson Creek.

Later he returned to Beaverlodge and bought SE 7-72-10 where he lived until 1958 when he again sold out and went to live at Vernon, B.C. for a few years. He



Murdo Dewar, Olaf Hegland and Mervin Hegland.

decided to return to Scotland with the intention of staying there but he found that he preferred Canada.

Murdo passed away in 1966 at the age of 74 and is buried in the Beaverlodge cemetery. He was retiring by nature but had many friends.

### THE FRED DIXON FAMILY

After graduating from McMaster University Frederick Bolton Dixon came west from western Ontario. He liked the west so well that he stayed, teaching school at Kaslo, Ladner and Nanaimo. When at Ladner he met Daisy Davis, a primary teacher and they were married in 1907. They had two daughters, Myrtle and Hazel.

When teaching in Nanaimo, the Dixons met the O'Briens and the Foys, and developed a lasting friendship. They became interested in the new Peace River country. In 1911 the Dixons, with Ellsworth Foy, travelled over the Edson Trail to the Beaverlodge area. Dr. O'Brien could not leave, but he encouraged his brother-in-law, John John, to come and get land.

Mr. Dixon taught at Beaverlodge and Mrs. Dixon the Appleton school. They had two more children, Marion and Arthur, who was named after Arthur Funnell.

Fred Dixon was a man of many interests. He had a book on veterinary work and the neighbors often called on him for help with a sick animal. He was interested in photography and taxidermy. He brought equipment with him and mounted a Snowy Owl and a Ptarmigan and many other birds.

The Foys and Dixons added much to the social life of the community. At one programme they entertained all with their part in a debate on "Resolved that a clean cranky wife is better than a dirty good-natured one". On another occasion Mr. Dixon was the only member of a debating team to appear. So he stood up and gave a very good argument for the affirmative, then sat down. He then got up and spoke on the negative side in an equally convincing way. At another time he filled in with his banjo and college songs.

The Dixons moved to Grande Prairie in 1921 where Mr. Dixon was principal of the High School. Mrs. Dixon later taught in the primary grades.

Mr. Dixon kept his land and some horses for several years and in the holidays he and his wife, family, and friends enjoyed adventurous pack trips into the mountains.



April, 1921 at Fred Dixon's. Fred and Daisy Dixon, Walter Funnell, Laura and Ed Heller, Miss Taylor and Tom Funnell, Myrtle, Marion and Arthur Dixon.



In 1927 they moved to Vermilion where Mr. Dixon taught in the School of Agriculture, and later in Olds. Myrtle, a teacher, married Jack Dorscheid of Glen Leslie. They had one daughter.

Hazel, a teacher, married Orion Grodeland of Rumsey.

Marion, a teacher married, Ross Bacon of Edmonton. They had one son and two daughters. Marion Bacon is the only surviving member of the Fred Dixon family.

Arthur married Annie Walker of Halcourt, farmed a short while, enlisted in the R.C.A.F. during World War II, worked in the old Midland Pacific elevator, was Beaverlodge Post Master, then worked for the Farm Credit Corporation before passing away in 1964.

Annie returned to the University of Alberta and completed her Masters Degree and taught in Teacher Colleges during the summer in Kenya, Gambia, and Indonesia. She is presently teaching in the Canadian Armed Forces in Baden, West Germany

Art and Annie had two children, Elaine and Donald. Elaine is married to James Mutrie and lives in Vancouver. She is attending the Law School at U.B.C. Donald teaches at the High School in Beaverlodge. He is married to the former LaVerne Ray, who operates La Verne's Fashions in Beaverlodge. They have a daughter, Beverly, and a son, Kelvin.

#### **BERTRAM ELCOME**

On June 8, 1911, Emil Swanson, Bertram Elcome and Harry Cranston filed on the first homesteads in the Appleton district. Bert's was the first house west of the Beaverlodge river.

Bert came from Margate, England where he was employed in a wholesale business. He adapted to farm life very well, starting as many did with a team of ox-

en. His first cabin was beside a creek on the north side of the quarter but he later decided to move to a better site. Neighbors Ben Stark and Ed Heller brought their oxen to help him move but the three teams wouldn't pull together so the cabin was taken down to be moved.

Later he built a larger house and before long his farm was complete with comfortable buildings, wind-break and a spacious yard. When the war came in 1915 Bert enlisted and went overseas.

A few years after his return his sister Alberta, a teacher at Mannville, joined him. Before leaving England she had taught in a private school for girls. She taught in the Appleton school for several years and then in Grande Prairie.

She married Joseph Johnston of Mannville. After his death a few years later, she returned to make her home with her brother Bert.

Their home was always open house and both were active in church and community affairs. Alberta Johnston was a life member of the Anglican W.A.

In March 1945 Bert died after a lengthy illness. Alberta sold the farm. After a year or so in Edmonton she returned to Beaverlodge where she lived until her death several years later.

Mrs. Isabel Perry added to her home in Beaverlodge to provide an apartment for Alberta who lived there a number of years. She was often Liza Perry's "after-four mother" until Isabel returned from school, a happy situation for all three.

Bert had one weakness, his cup of tea and it was far from weak. In fact it was unacceptable to him, he insisted unless "it was strong enough to support the spoon in an upright position!"

Another settler at Hinton Trail had similar thoughts but to him, "There is no such thing as too



Bert Elcome's first home, the first building west of the Beaverlodge river, 1911.

strong tea or coffee. It's just that the recipient is too weak!"



Anglican church women.

### THE ART ELLINGBOE STORY — as told to his daughter, Joy

Art Ellingboe was born and raised in the State of Minnesota. He later moved to McClusky, North Dakota and from there to Alberta. His mother was born in Norway and came to Norway Lake, Minnesota as a baby. Art loaded his settlers' effects and came up on the E.D. & B.C. railway to McLennan, thence to Grande Prairie. Even on the railway trip many difficulties were encountered. A tag was attached to one of the cars carrying Art's goods indicating that it needed repairs. It was sidetracked at every division, losing precious time, until finally at Moose Jaw, disgusted with the delays, Art threw the tag in the bush and the car was no longer held up. At McLennan, temperature 44 below, a fellow traveller lost a cow. It froze to death on the train. They had to buy hay, mostly cattails, at \$1.25 a bale. North of Grande Prairie the engine tipped over. Everyone aboard got blocks out of the bush to right it and get it back on the tracks. If the train crew saw a moose they would stop the train and try to shoot it. After three weeks on the train he arrived at Grande Prairie just before Christmas, 1918. He was greeted by four feet of snow on the ground and extreme cold. There he had to buy feed for the horses at exorbitant prices — bundles buried in the snow which the mice had eaten and only the straw was left, these at 25 cents a piece and he had to dig them out of the snow himself.

The year he arrived, Art homesteaded land later owned by Albert Miller but there was so much water on it in the spring that he abandoned it and filed on the land he still owns. He lived in a tent for some time. Once a neighbor's pigs got into the tent and mixed the oats for the horses with the flour, sugar and other staples of the larder. He broke and cleared all his land by hand with a grub axe and a team of horses to pull the trees.

He broke horses. Once he bought a team of brones at Wembley. One was a black outlaw he named Nig and for many years he took him to all the rodeos around the country. Despite Nig's ferocious bucking at these

events, Art was able to break him for farm work and he became a good dependable work horse — even though he didn't care for riders!

In the early days, Art hauled freight to Nick Creek, 150 miles north of Fort St. John. At night the men shovelled the snow and put their blankets on the ground. Often the temperature read 40 below. The teams had to be doubled up on the hills of the Pouce Coupe River, Holland's Coulee and Blueberry River Hill. They crossed the Peace at Rolla Landing. Once Art broke a sleigh runner on rough ice, so he cut a tree and made a new runner, using a jack knife to cut holes for the stark pins. Then he took bolts out of the tongue and attached them to the makeshift runner to strengthen it. When he and his companions delivered their loads they didn't know whether or not they would get paid. However, two or three months later they received their money.

Once the men, with two four-ups and four single teams, had stopped on the ice to eat dinner and rest the horses, when suddenly they heard the ice crack. It sounded like a cannon going off. The men thought for sure they would all be drowned. They waited but there was no further noise so they finished eating and then carried on. The freight on these trips consisted of flour, boots, hardware and other groceries to trade with the Indians. The round trip took 30 days.

Art had the first threshing machine in the Appleton district, a 28" cylinder International bought about 1927 from Dan Chambers. He also had one of the first combines in the district, a Massey Harris pull-type. Once all the money he had to his name, \$60.00, was lost in a wallet while plowing and was never found again. In 1928 the house was built when his mother and stepfather, Mr. and Mrs. Akerlund, came up from the United States. It was made out of logs that Jim Cory and old Ivor Bolen got out and Art erected it himself. Grandma Akerlund was famous for her doughnuts; she baked every Saturday and always had coffee and fresh doughnuts in the house. She was a dressmaker and was running her father's farm in North Dakota when they came up here. She had a lot of house plants and we still have the original Christmas cactus that she owned.

In 1941 Art married Kozey Willard, whose family had homesteaded around Tupper, B.C. Her family had lived in Ontario for generations before Grandpa Willard came West. The Ellingboe family grew to eight children; four married at this writing. The ones still "at home" are James, Dennis, Kerry and Gloria. Married are Joy, Mrs. Francis Juneau; Arta, Mrs. Dave Juneau — both of Hythe; Alton of Hay River and Bessie, Mrs. Bob Watson of Grande Prairie.

Despite many hardships Kozey and Art are very young at heart. They moved to Beaverlodge last year where Art retired and Kozey works at the hospital.

### THE FITZSIMMONS BROTHERS

Robert and William Fitzsimmons were born in Ontario. Bob went to the United States in 1911 and during World War I served in the American army. When he was about 18, he was in Missoula, Montana. There had been a slump in business and a bunch of lumberjacks were broke and wanted him to buy them beer. He said he wouldn't do that but would buy them dinner. When



they went into a small restaurant they filled all the tables. The waiter was surprised when he ordered dinner and said he would pay for them all. This he did as he had a thousand dollars in his pocket.

In 1919 he came back to Canada, going to Waterhole for a few years.

In 1927 he bought land in the Appleton district. He had one of the first big cars around and was quite generous with its use. His mother, Jenny Ligette, (she had been married a second time) lived with him for three or four years until her death. She was buried in the Halcourt cemetery.

Bob is at present at Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie. He enjoys the company of his roommate, Jim Dixon a former neighbor.

Bill Fitzsimmons and his wife Phyl, also from Ontario, lived in Alliance, Alberta before coming to the district. In 1927 they bought land next to his brother, Bob and farmed there for many years. Their daughter, Alice attended the Appleton school and eventually married Thomas Parfrey, a neighbor.

Not long after that Mr. and Mrs. Fitzsimmons retired and moved into Beaverlodge for their few remaining years.

#### THE FOY FAMILY — by Mona Fairbairn

What motivates a person to become a pioneer is an interesting question. It may be a Spirit of adventure, a wish to own land no one has owned before or maybe just an itching foot.

I have often thought how persuasive my father, Ellsworth Foy and Fred Dixon must have been to talk Mother and Mrs. Dixon into leaving comfortable homes in Nanaimo, B.C. where Dad was principal of the Public School and Mr. Dixon of the High School and go over the Edson Trail with five children all under seven years old. My sister Helen was six, I, Mona was five and our brother Kenner under two. Myrtle Dixon was a year younger than I, and Hazel about Kenner's age.

Dad's family, the Foy's came from Ireland to New York when the States was a British Colony. They departed to New Brunswick as U.E., Loyalists and from there to Ontario where they farmed for several generations.

Mother's father, William Kenner, a Methodist Minister left Cornwall some time in the mid 1870's and came to Ontario. So both sides of the family were even then on the move.

In 1910 the newspapers were full of stories about the Peace River Country and the desire of the government to settle the land. Each family could file on three parcels of land and prove it up by building houses on each one, living on them so many months and breaking and seeding so much land. A railway was promised in two years.

In 1911 Dad and Mr. Dixon, who had talked of little else over the past year made their decision and the family was again on the move. The men had to stay until the end of the school term in June but Mr. Dixon's Uncle Tom Bolton walked in from Edson in the spring and filed by proxy on a slight rise of land overlooking the Beaverlodge river. A neighbor helped him prepare a small plot on which he planted potatoes, carrots and

turnips so we would have vegetables next winter.

The men left in June but we waited until fall when the rivers would be low enough to ford but before the snow fell. Mr. Dixon and Walter Funnell met us in Edmonton, leaving Dad to finish work on the house. We set forth in two wagons in October over the Edson Trail. It took us two weeks and we timed it well, driving the last few miles through the first snow storm of the season. Dad met us at the door of the log cabin with a lantern, very glad to see everyone after a month by himself. Mother ran in the doorway out of the snow and fell down the cellar they had dug in the dirt floor and had covered with a tarp.

That first winter was the test of our ability to adapt ourselves to the country. The men had been able to build one log cabin and a barn. They had built bunks across both ends of the cabin and we drew a curtain at night to give each family some privacy. All the cooking was done on a little camp stove. We had Uncle Tom's vegetables and a few supplies Mr. Dixon was able to bring in with us. Game was plentiful then and we lived on wild meat. Rabbit stew was our staple diet. Some people were very averse to eating rabbit but to Mother and Mrs. Dixon with their English background of "jugged hare" it was no problem. We had moose and venison and the lovely white meat of ptarmigan.

We ran out of many items. Sugar and coal oil were strictly rationed. We made tallow candles which gave a little light in the evenings. My sister still has a potato masher Dad carved from wood.

As we camped on the way in we escaped a major hazard of those times — lice. They were usually picked up at stopping houses. However many people visited us so the inevitable happened. We children were warned not to discuss this interesting development when we had company. I remember well one dinner when one of us picked one of the little varmits out of his hair and snapped it with professional finesse between thumb and finger nail without saying a word. A deadly silence fell over the company as well. Tired of washing screaming children's heads in coal oil the women sent a frantic call to Dr. O'Brien in Nanaimo for help. He managed to send us a jar known only as "blue ointment". There was a theory that a louse went from head to toes every day so we had yarn saturated with the ointment tied around our middles and it actually worked. We were now able to feel superior to our less fortunate neighbours.

As Christmas drew near no parcels or mail had come through — in fact our Christmas parcels arrived



Elsworth Foy on the Edson trail.

next June. Mother and Mrs. Dixon had saved enough sugar to make a pan of candy and they found some handkerchiefs for the little girls. Dad made a spool toy for Kenner. They sewed cheese cloth bags and put two pieces of candy and the handkerchiefs in each and we found them under our pillows Christmas morning. We were so happy with our candy as we hadn't seen any for months and we had a wonderful dinner of ptarmigan, vegetables and prune pie. After dinner we sat around in the light of our tallow candles and sang Christmas songs. Mr. Dixon strummed on a banjo he had acquired at college. I can't remember a happier Christmas.

The next summer was a very busy one. The men had to build two more houses and to clear some land and plow it for a crop the following year. Clearing the brush was a real chore. The danger of setting the prairie on fire was very real in those days. There was a part Indian fire warden and Johnny was very conscientious and good at his job. When on official business he wore a celluloid collar as a badge of office which looked odd with his deer skin jacket. This amused everyone greatly, including his Indian friends. The problem was to burn off your bush, not set a prairie fire, and avoid Johnny.

Dad and Mr. Dixon had some brush in the middle of a field they felt they had to burn off. Informed that Johnny was elsewhere they plowed a fire guard and started their fires on both sides of the brush each watching a fire. They must have been misinformed about Johnny's whereabouts as he arrived and ordered them to put out the fires. Mr. Dixon asked him to help put the fire out on his side so he and Johnny beat away with sacks while Dad on the other side encouraged his to burn. When his was going well he called Johnny to help and Mr. Dixon got his fire going again. This went on until the brush was all burned over and they congratulated each other and Johnny on their fire fighting ability and took him home for supper.

The animals on the farm were a great source of interest. Our first cow, Bossy, a red shorthorn was a fine cow but she had her little ways. She loved to fight and had one horn hanging down beside one ear the result of one of her battles. She was a good milker if you could beat her to it, but she had a bad habit of milking herself. A neighbor told Dad to mix up a paste of mustard and cayenne pepper and rub it on her bag. Dad was crouched down smearing this concoction on Bossy and holding the saucer in his other hand. Bossy turned her head and licked the saucer with evident enjoyment so Dad saw that wouldn't work. He made a wooden collar for her so she couldn't turn her head and that was a success. It also made it difficult for her to go through fences and fight with the neighbor's cows.

I remember one Sunday when the animals really outdid themselves. Dad was very proud of his matching team of Clydes, Prince and Princess. Princess was expecting her first colt but Dad thought not for a few weeks. He was wrong. We drove to Church and the sermon was beginning when there was a great commotion outside. The men all rushed out leaving the minister only the women and children. Sermons were rather lengthy in those days so the men

managed to unhitch Princess and she delivered her colt in fine style before the sermon ended. Leaving Princess with a neighbor we drove home with the Dixons. When we drove into the yard we could hear a cow bellowing. Bossy had managed to make her way into the first house we had built and now used as a store house. We had turnips stored in the cellar and Bossy had gone down into the cellar and had been eating them while we were at church. She was swollen to about twice her normal size. Mr. Dixon consulted his vet's book and announced that if you stabbed through the cow's hide into the stomach wall and inserted a quill all would be well. Dad caught a hen, secured a quill and they performed the operation. Old Bossy deflated like a balloon with an overpowering smell of turnip gas and they got her out. Mr. Dixon said, "You know, Foy, it says in the Bible if your ass falls in a pit on the Sabbath day you are justified in getting it out but it doesn't mention a cow." Dad replied that anyone in his right mind would say that that cow was an ass, so they justified their labours on the Sabbath.

For several years Dad drove over the Edson Trail to bring in supplies. It was a long trip but he enjoyed going. Evenings were long at the stopping places so he organized a little entertainment. Dan Chambers and Mr. Johns sang but the real show stopper was Sam Johnson. He had grown a reddish beard and was brought on as a wild man captured on the Wapiti. He roared and growled as Dad put him through his tricks. Dad always claimed that offers to establish him as a producer came from far and wide.

After five years the railroad had only reached Grande Prairie. So far from a market the farm was not very profitable. After teaching a term at Halcourt and Beaverlodge an offer was made from Grande Prairie and he resumed his teaching.

Dad died in 1932 at the age of 58. Mother lived to within a few months of her 90th birthday in 1963. Our brother Kenner died in 1945. Helen, now Helen Tissington lives at Flying Shot and I, Mona Fairbairn with my husband Tom have retired to Victoria.

Many things were difficult but I have never heard our parents say they had the least regret that they had decided to be Peace River pioneers in what Mother always referred to as "The Early Days."

#### THE GRIMMETT STORY — by Newton Grimmett

George Grimmett was born in 1864 in Bladon, near Woodstock, Oxford County, England. As a child he was brought to Alleghany City, across the river from Pittsburg. His father, unfortunate in his association with his neighbors decided to move back under the British Flag. They took land on Maple Lake, Haliburton County in the Ontario backwoods. The barrenness of their holdings and the building of the C.P.R. decided them to move west.

At age 17, dad drove a mule team building C.P.R. grades. He then homesteaded at Oak Lake, on Pipestone creek south of Virden. Later he apprenticed himself to his older brother John and became a watchmaker. Still later he took a correspondence course from Detroit Optical College and qualified as Doctor of Optometry. He set up an office in Holland, Manitoba where he met Kate Almira Brooks, a





The first bridge across the Beaverlodge, at Heller's. Built by the settlers.

dressmaker. She was born 1869, in Princeton, near Woodstock, Oxford County, Ontario. Toward the end of the century dad went on west and set up a jewelry store in the booming mining town of Sandon B.C. He then persuaded Kate to follow him. They were married in June, 1901 at Nelson.

Erma and I were born in Sandon but in 1904 moved to Vancouver. Here Nain, Mrs. Sandy Macalister, Ruth, Mrs. Glen Conley and Pearl, Mrs. Lang Godfrey were born. After ten years in business in Vancouver, dad took us out to a small dairy farm at Clayburn, near Abbotsford as a preparatory step to going north to the Peace River district. Our friends, the Fred Dixons gave us glowing accounts of the beauty of the Beaverlodge Valley. Consequently in April 1916, dad left the family to run the farm while he proceeded up north. He travelled by rail to the end of steel at Clairmont. Here he built a small frame office 10 by 12 feet, which he also used as living quarters. This building did some travelling. When dad moved to the village of Lake Saskatoon, he took it with him, hauled by horses. Here he later sold it to lawyer Archer, who moved it to the new town of Wembley about 1926. In 1929 it was taken to the new railway site of Beaverlodge, where it was occupied by Joseph Archer's young law partner, Wayne Stanley. As a young man dad had developed into a highly respected lay preacher and had held services in many parts of southern Manitoba. Naturally upon meeting the Reverend Charles Hopkins, they became close friends. In 1917 dad was appointed resident minister to Rolla, B.C., for a one year period. Meanwhile he had filed on a homestead S.E. 19-71-10-W6, two miles west of the Fred Dixons in the Appleton school district. The Dahl brothers, Elmer and Ben took the contract to clear and break the first ten acres. When the family moved from the Fraser Valley we loaded a box car of settler's effects at the C.N.R. station at Matsqui. This consisted of two mares and their colts, four dairy cows and two calves, a dog, a cat, our home furnishings and several boxes of freshly picked apples. Al Baker of Dewdney was in charge but he refused to go alone so I age 13 was to go with him. We left on Thursday evening in October and arrived in Grande Prairie two weeks later. Most of this time was spent sitting on sidings.

Mother and the girls shopped at James Ramsey Department Store, Edmonton for winter clothes. They

arrived in Grande Prairie before us and stayed at the Immigration Hall. We stored our furniture in the loft of Andy Dahl's livery stable and sent the apples to the root house on his homestead, the old Beaverlodge sports grounds.

Mr. Baker and I drove the cattle to Ernie and Charlie Hopkins farm on the north-west corner of Saskatoon Lake, where they were to be left for the winter. It took us two days on foot. The rest of the family was already there.

Next morning we set out for Rolla. The seven of us rode in two rigs; dad's buggy, one seat, one horse and the little grey mare and our democrat, two seats and two mares, the colts running behind. The trip took three full days, the shortest days we had ever seen. There was no road, just a trail winding around such objects as sloughs and bluffs of trees and telegraph poles and following the path of least resistance. Distances were much greater then than now, Beaverlodge to Hythe was 15 miles, a full day's journey. It is now nine miles and takes nine minutes.

At Canyon Creek the hill was so steep we roughlocked the democrat and of course all passengers walked down and up the other side. At journey's end we were treated most hospitably by the Miller family at Rock Creek.

During the winter we attended North Pouce Coupe school, with Miss Braden the teacher. The Millers transported us to school and back each day in a bob sleigh made for the purpose.

Soon we started to retrace our steps, this time to dad's homestead. The day school ended in June, our parents would not let us cheat on even one day of attendance despite the fact we were moving to another province, a kind of morality that seems to have entirely disappeared today. All except dad were seeing our new home for the first time. Like many others we were to live in a tent. How seven of us managed to sleep in a space ten by twelve feet I can't explain. Any privacy we had came from the darkness and our respect for each other.

There was a well to dig and a house and barn to build. On July 21, 1918 dad and I set out for the Hopkins' place to get our cows, a two-day trip, I remember the date for that was the night of the big frost. All the early grain that had headed out was ruined. Only the very late crops such as our ten acres of oats recovered, a lucky break. The cows loved their new home, good water from our shallow well in the creek bottom and acres of vetch knee-high. It is said that in earlier times in the Bear Lake area vetch was hip-high. When riding horseback you could drag your feet in it.

Dad and I built a large frame house and as soon as the roof was on we moved in. This building was most notable for what it didn't have; no water, no plumbing, no electricity, no basement (a hole under the floor was called a root cellar), no chimney, (stove pipes and roof jack only) no porch, no paint, no partitions (curtains) no cupboards.

In October we started on a large 30 by 40 foot log barn using material grown on the place. Then came the first snowstorm. We tied the cows in a grove of

spruce near the house. In the morning they were covered with snow. As evening came on there wasn't a cow to be found. We soon arrived at the right conclusion; they had had enough of homesteading. Sure enough, they had remembered Hopkins' modern barn and that is where we found them, 20 miles from home.

In those days if you had to wait for the thresherman you stored your crop in stacks. A small crew would do, no bundle wagons needed, just an operator and two spike pitchers. Our oat straw was blown on the top of our new barn as a roof. This proved warm and serviceable in winter. However, when it rained outside, it rained inside for days after every storm.

The big winter started on October 20, 1919 with a three-foot snowstorm which lay with us until the following May, well over six months of winter. There was plenty of feed for our stock until cattleman began bringing in their herds from southern Alberta. One man, Steve Craig brought 200 head. The price of feed began to rise immediately, a three cent oat sheaf went to ten cents and finally to 25 cents and a load of straw which could usually be had free for the hauling went to \$25.00. In times of plenty only oat straw was fed, now they hauled wheat and finally barley. One man even hauled manure because it contained bedding. The barley presented a problem as the beards would collect in the cattle's mouths behind the teeth. This had to be removed daily by running your finger behind the teeth and flipping the accumulation away so the mouth could be closed and chewing resumed.

Feed was almost gone by April. Our cattle went daily to the woodpile where they chewed on dry poplar bark. One man saved his herd by giving them a daily grain ration and supplying poplar bark and willow twigs for cud-making. Most cattle survived but many were thin and weak especially those with bots.

About this time dad became sales representative for the Magnet cream separator. He drove his little team and democrat all over the country. He would repair your watch, fit you with glasses, sell you a Magnet or preach you a sermon. During the '18 flu epidemic he even conducted funeral services.

During this five year period 1918-23, mother and I ran the farm. Mother hand-milked a herd of Holsteins and made as good a pound of dairy butter as Mrs. Diefenbaker. Her day started at 4:00 a.m. and ended at midnight, a 20-hour day. She was the only person I ever knew who could manage on four hours sleep, plus a 4 p.m. catnap. She was always there, always busy, always self-possessed. I never ever heard her say an ill or unkind word of anyone. I have been trying to live up to this ever since.

Other products of the farm came from hogs, chickens, turkeys and garden. Mother had raised 100 bronze turkeys, the year of the grasshopper plague. This proved to be a fortunate coincidence as we didn't use poison.

We valued our contacts with the Experimental Farm. Consistently the women folk went each summer to pick fruit, chiefly raspberries and currants. We grew plots of farm seeds, the most memorable being hullless oats and beardless barley.

#### FOOTNOTE — by Ruth (Grimmett) Conley

Newton passed away on November 11, 1973. I shall bring the family story to a conclusion.

Mother and dad were determined that homesteading should not deprive us of an education. Mrs. Fred Dixon was the teacher of the Appleton school. Under her excellent instruction we completed grade eight. Then Mr. Dixon who was a high school teacher, helped Erma, Newt and Nain with high school subjects until the Dixon family moved to Grande Prairie, where Mr. Dixon became principal of the high school and Mrs. Dixon taught in the public school.

At that time, 1921 there was no high school in Beaverlodge. Erma, Nain and I were bundled off to Grande Prairie by team with a wagon load of furniture as we were to "bach" in a "shack" for the years it would take to complete our high school. How homesick we were at times! Again the Dixons helped us through a very trying period in our young lives.

Four of us, Newt, Nain, Pearl and I taught in various schools throughout the area now known as the County of Grande Prairie. Erma worked for many years in the Land Titles Offices in Edmonton, until her retirement when she chose the old home city of Vancouver where she now resides. Newt and his wife, May (Conley) also moved to Vancouver in 1939 where he taught until his retirement five years ago. Nain had always had a yen for nursing so abandoned teaching, took her nurse's training in Vancouver where she served as a Public Health Nurse for some time. Later she did Public Health work at Rolla, B.C. and Quesnel. There she met and married Alexander (Sandy) Macalister. Their home is on the shore of scenic Mcleese Lake, B.C. They have one daughter, Sandra.

In 1935, the year of high floods throughout the Peace River Block, Pearl married Lang Godfrey who was then working at the Experimental Farm. They had planned a honeymoon in Vancouver but much to their dismay all roads and the railway line had been cut off by the floods. Not to be outdone they decided to go by plane. As our air service at that time left much to be desired, they found that there was room for only one passenger. Much to the merriment of the wedding guests, it was decided that Pearl should go and Lang would follow. Two days later Lang was able to catch a plane from Peace River town.

Lang had an opportunity to work for Canadian Industries Limited in the agricultural branch. Through the years this work has taken them across Canada from Vancouver to Montreal. They have had a busy life raising their family of two boys and three girls. Since retiring they have built a permanent home at Benoir Lake, Ontario, where their children and grandchildren come to visit and enjoy the superb boating and fishing.

While teaching in my first school at Flying Shot Lake I met and married Glen Conley. We have remained in the Peace where Glen has farmed and trapped and I have taught in various schools for a total of 38 years. Our two girls, Arlie and Darlene attended the Grande Prairie high school. Arlie married Frank Tissington who has been in business in Grande Prairie for a number of years. Arlie has been a nurse in the



Grande Prairie Hospital. Their daughter, Cathy is taking Education at the University of Alberta, while their son, Cameron is in junior high. Darlene married Robert Dean of the R.C.M.P. Identification Branch and they too have a daughter and son, Kim and Glen. At present they are living in Prince George, B.C. where Darlene continues her teaching.

Mother and dad sold the homestead to our good neighbor, Art Ellingboe and moved to Beaverlodge. Dad continued his optical work until he retired and moved back to Vancouver where he passed away at the age of 85. Mother died two years later at 83. There must be something about pioneering that adds to one's life span.

## THE FIRST CAR FROM EDMONTON TO GRANDE PRAIRIE — by Newton Grimmert

In the summer of 1927 Newton Grimmert of Beaverlodge who had completed Normal school at Calgary and Clayton Third of Goodfare, who had been attending Calgary Technical school decided to attempt the homebound trip with a Model T chassis they had purchased for very little.

Up to this time no car had made the trip from Edmonton to Grande Prairie as the road was all but impassable in many places and only railway bridges spanned the large rivers. These obstacles represented a challenge to the boys. Money was almost non-existent and tires were needed. Finally they selected eight of the best from a pile of discards.

Newton tells the story of their adventures:

Inquiries about the new road to the Peace brought mostly blank looks. We tried the tourist bureau, "Yes a road had been proposed and work had been started. However it was a bad year for road work. The northern spring had been very wet and rainy weather had continued into July", was the encouraging answer we received.

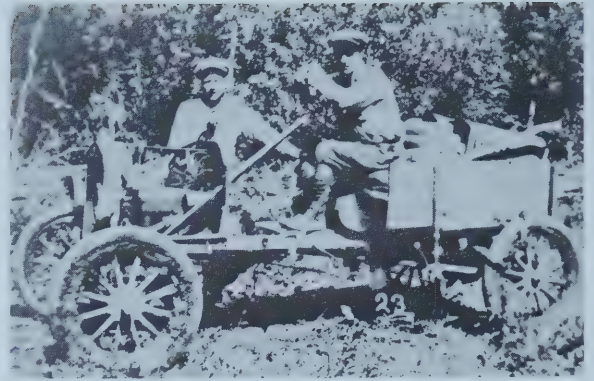
The weather was ideal when our strange looking rig headed north into 500 miles of wilderness. The truck box, about 15 inches high over the rear axle contained a minimum camp kit, grub box, good axe and a short handled shovel. The whole was covered by the tarp. Above this towered a Pisa of 30 x 3 1/4" tires defying all laws of gravity.

Forty miles from Edmonton we turned west to Westlock where we were informed that the new road did not go that way. We retraced our steps ten miles to Clyde. From there the road was to continue to Athabasca Landing.

Evening was soon upon us as we entered the sandhills. We experienced our first flat tire and decided to camp. In all we had travelled about 75 miles but were only 55 miles on our way.

The next morning we found the sand pretty loose. Clayt plodded behind, pushing where necessary. Once we bogged down and had to shovel. Part of the road, through muskeg was corduroyed. Where there were long stretches of too-loose sand, sawdust had been dumped on the road from nearby mills. Sometimes it was mixed with slabs and waste. After crossing the corduroy we invariably had a flat tire; once we had two. That day we changed and mended seven.

We camped that night on an old millsite at the edge



The first car over the Athabasca-High Prairie road. Newt Grimmert and Clayton Third, 1927.

of the village of Athabasca Landing, 100 miles on our way. We were told that it was 55 miles to Smith but that the proposed road was only in the slashing stage.

A third fine morning found us chugging west. Then as we turned north the road suddenly disappeared into the water for a hundred yards. Almost before I had stopped, Clayt was seated in the grass taking off his shoes and rolling up his pant legs.

"What are you going to do?"

"Find out if there's any bottom and if so how deep." Clayt waded in. At no place was it deeper than his knees.

"Go real slow. Don't splash water on your spark plugs.

Gently, like an old dog taking to the water I nosed her in and came safely across.

For a couple of miles more the primitive trail continued through bush and we descended to the valley below. Here we found a new log culvert sitting in the water, minus approaches of any kind. It looked lonely there.

"Well somebody has been here before us", I laughed.

"How are you going to cross?" asked Clayt.

"Go around the end of it, I guess" I said.

"There are no planks or boards."

"Well, we'll cut four poles and tie them together in pairs then lay them down the width of the wheels apart and run over on them."

We estimated not over 30 miles covered that day. We felt doubtful of reaching Smith next day. If only we could get to Smith and the railway.

With a sigh of relief, about the middle of the afternoon we emerged upon a smooth sandy trail and sped along at 15 miles an hour into the railway divisional point. At the edge of the town we looked down at the cable ferry coming across the Athabasca.

A lone figure came up the bank leading two pack horses. He stopped when he saw our car.

"You fellows really figure on getting to Grande Prairie?"

"That's the general idea," I said. "Don't you think we'll make it?"

"Never in the world, unless you ship her to High Prairie."

"Why do you say that?"

"I just came through from Slave Lake, that's about 40 miles from here and the road is flooded. This is the wettest season in ten years. I had to lay flat on my horse to keep my feet dry. I even got the bottom of my packs wet."

"Why," he continued, "the streets of the village are even under water. You can paddle a canoe down them."

Nothing for it but to hit the tracks, we decided so we let the air out of the tires to get greater traction and we finally got into high gear.

Toward noon we came to Spurfield. There was a small sawmill working there on the sluggish Salteaux River. This was the first sign of life that we had seen that day. Everyone in the mill stopped and stared at us as we went by. We didn't stop. Toward evening we were still in the muskeg when suddenly we heard a train whistle!

"I thought you said there was no train today."

"There isn't supposed to be, but there it is rounding the bend up ahead! There's a water tower ahead, too."

"I can't drive off here or we'll sink in the muskeg."

"Drive as fast as you dare, there's higher land ahead. Maybe we can make it. The train is slowing down. Yep, they're stopping for water."

I drove up to the locomotive and jumped the track. This was the water tower at Mitsue. All the crew of the work train, for such it was, descended and came forward.

"Where did you fellows come from?" said the engineer in a friendly voice.

"From Edmonton", said Clayt.

"And where do you think you're going?"

"Into the Great Peace River country", said Clayt.

"How far is it to Slave Lake?", inquired Clayt.

"Just seven miles to the station but the village lies two miles farther north."

"We'll try and make it that far tonight."

We left the high ground of the Mitsue and once more entered the muskeg. Suddenly the car began to spit, choked and stopped.

"Sounds like we're out of gas."

We sat there surveying the scene. On all sides stretched the low, flat muskeg with water showing here and there. Near at hand small piles of rotten ties squatted along the right of way, where the section hands had placed them. New ties rested here and there waiting to take the place of the old.

"We can make camp on the double track ahead," said Clayt.

"Yes, and we can lay four ties sloping into the water and push the car out on to them for the night", I replied.

"Well, you make camp, and I'll walk back to the water tower and see if I can buy some gas."

I laid out the blankets between the rails on the sidetrack, gathered some pieces of rotten ties for a fire and dipped some water out of the muskeg. It was dark brown and full of wigglers. I took a porous piece of cloth and strained out the meat. "It's tea we want, not soup."

After quite some time I could see Clayt coming through the gloom, lugging a five gallon can.

"I see you got some gas. How much did it cost?"

"Nothing, he said he couldn't charge for it, because it belongs to the railway." - Lucky us!

Toward noon we saw a crew of men ahead tamping ballast. The foreman was very gruff and refused to let his men stop long enough for us to pass. We felt worse about this than any of our previous difficulties. We knew we were trespassing but as long as no one seemed to object we were quite happy. We held a whispered consultation behind our vehicle.

Right on the dot of twelve, the foreman gave a signal — tamping stopped instantly. The hands carried their tools to their speeders and headed west to dinner. After a slight pause we followed slowly.

At Slave Lake station we left the rails with a sigh of relief and headed north into the village. There we found the streets under water. Balancing our way along logs and planks, laid out for the purpose we found our way to Schurter's garage. Here we were greeted with open arms as Charlie Schurter had a modern garage in anticipation of 'near future' trade.

We continued on but were soon forced to take to the railway again.

"This is bad business." I said ruefully.

"How come?"

"By the process of simple arithmetic. On this railway travel we make just five miles to the gallon of gas, and thirty miles to the quart of oil. In other words we are rapidly going broke."

"It's over a week since we left Edmonton and according to that railroad milepost we're just 170 miles on our way."

We found a newly-made road into Canyon Creek but we stopped where we were and made camp in the middle of the road, right at the edge of the track.

Next morning we were more cheerful for reportedly there was some good road ahead. We rolled along merrily. We stopped to admire the new government fish hatchery. It was the first clean, modern building we had seen since leaving the city.

Inquiries about the road were greeted with blank looks. No one had come through from Kinuso since the big rains.

Once more we entered the woods. There was a half-graded road but it was composed of newly-turned, partly-dried mud. We crept along, frequently getting stuck. We found a short piece of logging chain and tied it around one rear wheel. This worked better than regular chains for the wheel would spin until the chain hit the mud and this would heave the car jerkily forward. That day and the following one we didn't cover more than eight miles!

On the evening of the second day we came out on a dry hillside leading down to the Swan River valley. We camped on a small creek. All we had left was some flour and baking powder. The mosquitoes were particularly savage that night. As we cooked our flapjacks in the frying pan the mosquitoes would singe their wings and fall into the batter. When one side of the cake was cooked we could blow the crippled fliers into the edge of the pan and pick them out from there. For



dessert we had some wild strawberries that we picked on the bank of the creek.

Next morning we rolled pleasantly into Kinuso. Here we were told that the construction crew was encamped two miles out of town. The contract for the section of road was held by the Williscroft Brothers. Mr. Williscroft invited us to dine with the crew. The long table was set in a large tent. We thought we had never seen so much good food. We gorged ourselves until we thought we would founder.

The Williscrofts gave us a contract to cut timber from an acre and a half of right-of-way at \$30.00 an acre, giving us a grub stake in advance. It took us eight days to do this. Having collected some money we proceeded on past the water tower at Arcadia and finally to Enilda where we left the tracks for the last time. That night we camped on the East Prairie river.

The remainder of our journey was comparatively uneventful. There was a long northern detour and some minor mud after we left High Prairie but that night we camped at Stinking Lake near McLennan. One more day brought us to Peace River Crossing.

Another dawn found us on another huge railway bridge as we crossed the Peace. Though it was still nearly 200 miles we hoped to make it home that day. Morning saw us through the northern settlements and back across the Peace on the Dunvegan Ferry. We started up the long hill. About halfway up the car sputtered and stopped. Clayt jumped down.

"Sounds like we're out of gas."

"Impossible."

"No, it's not that, the hill's too steep. Gas tank's lower than the carburetor."

By backing up the hill, cramping and lifting, we got turned around. The motor started at once and with my foot on the reverse pedal, I backed around and up the twisting trail to the top.

Late in the afternoon we crossed Spirit River and headed south into the Burnt Hills. Just when it looked as though we could make it home we had a flat tire. All our patches had been used up, so we camped in the hills.

We avoided Grande Prairie, turning west at Sexsmith to the Harvey Housman homestead where my sister, Nain Grimmatt was the teacher of the Equity school. We were tired and dirty and hadn't shaved since leaving High Prairie. Our clothes were in rags, so we decided to shun publicity.

After eating in Wembley, our first meal indoors since leaving Edmonton, we had 45 cents left. We bought a gallon of gas and spent our last nickel on a chocolate bar which we split between us.

In after times when recounting the highlights of our journey, I commented "I wouldn't go through that again for a thousand dollars."

"I agree", said Clayt, "but then we wouldn't have missed it for a thousand dollars either."

## ED HELLER

Edward Joseph Heller was born in Iowa in 1889. His father was born in Rochester, New York and his parents in turn, came from Germany. His mother was born in Austria and came to the United States in 1880. Ed's father was a machinist. As a young man he went



The Heller girls off to school at Appleton, 1934.



The Heller children off to school in Beaverlodge, 1940.



Ed Heller and granddaughter, Lynn skating on the Beaverlodge river.

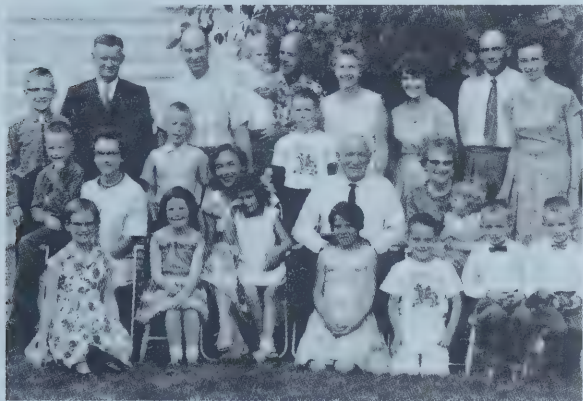




Flooding on the Ed Heller farm, April 25, 1935.



Mrs. Heller's Birthday Party. Front row: Anne Duffield, Laura Heller, Dodie Roach, Gina Harcourt. Back row: Marion Heller, Len Duffield, Mickey Cox, Jack Cox, Ed Heller, Bill Harcourt, Tommy Roach, Arthuretta Branscombe, Bob Heller.



Ed and Laura Heller's 40th. wedding anniversary with Edna and Ned Sparkes, Beth and Bruce MacDonell, Robert and Muriel Heller, Marion and Vernon Hill and their families, 1960.

west for two years following the harvest reaper from Kentucky to Minnesota. He recalls that the first binders were mainly made of wood and in some districts the hired help set them on fire to protect their jobs.

When Ed was a year old the family moved to the Sand Hill country of Nebraska, where they stayed four years. Then on to southern Nebraska for 16 years, then to South Dakota. Ed came to Canada in 1913, to Saskatchewan, where he drove a big 60 HP gas tractor made by Emerson-Brantingham that pulled five 14-inch ploughs in the tough sod, with power to spare. Ed recalls attending a sports day at Mildren and Homer



Mr. and Mrs. Ed Heller, early pioneers.

Jaque coming over from Conquest on the opposing baseball team. After harvest he went to Kerrobert for fall ploughing, then to Edmonton and to a pick and shovel job at Goat River near McBride.

Ed's brother Charlie had previously visited the Peace but had decided its development would be too slow for his ambitions. Nevertheless Ed soon found himself with Fred Colette of Buffalo Lakes and Kenneth Murray, who located near Rolla, walking from Edson into the Peace. He cut wood for a small portable steam engine at Lake Saskatoon for a while. From there, Oliver Johnson hired him for the winter while he and C. O. Pool went out for supplies.

Ed filed on the Sammy Johnson place on April 2, 1914 and enlisted in World War I in the 66th Infantry. By this time he had a team of oxen, a pony, a cow and 10 acres in wheat which froze. He recalls that he had no money but lots to trade with and had plenty to eat. He was discharged February 17, 1919 and took up a Free Grant, land which had been abandoned twice.

About this time Miss Laura Davis had come to visit her sister, Mrs. Fred Dixon on a neighboring farm. Laura's parents came from England and crossed Canada on the first colonization train, to Tynehead, near New Westminster. Her father took a homestead there in 1887 and had to clear trees for a building spot and at first had to pack his supplies nine miles on his back. Laura took her high school in Nanaimo and normal school in Vancouver. She taught primary school in Cloverdale and recalls fair-headed Alfred Carder as a pupil. Ed and Laura were married in October, 1920. In the spring of 1926 they rented their farm because of a war injury Ed had and moved to White Rock. They returned in the fall of 1930 to resume farming.

The original homestead house was only 16 x 20 feet, a bit crowded. The floor was made of rough lumber. The boards shrank to such an extent the cracks between them became large enough to allow the sweepings to fall through, hence sweeping was no problem. Shortly after their marriage they moved into



a better log house on the soldier grant. The house was 18 x 20 ft. with a better floor and without the sod roof. On their return to the farm in 1930 they built a two-storey house by the Beaverlodge river. This necessitated living in a tent until mid-November, then moving to the luxury of a basement. Laura recalls that on the last and coldest night when they were in the tent the procedure was to line the four children in bed and periodically to shift them around so that the one next to the wall could be moved to the inside to warm up and the others shifted to accommodate. Ed also recalls purchasing a propane tank in 1955 at a cost of \$550, more than the cost of the original homestead plus all the fuel purchased to that date. He also recalls that on one occasion in the early days he took stock of his current assets. They amounted to one penny and one postage stamp.

There were four children. Robert married Muriel Fulton and lives at Vermilion, where he is farm manager at the Agricultural College. Marion, a teacher, married Vernon Hill and they are farming at Beaverlodge. Edna is a secretary-receptionist married an R.A.F. chap, Stanley Sparkes, who adopted Beaverlodge after World War II. Beth, a nurse married Bruce MacDonell, formerly of Rio Grande, Beaverlodge and Edmonton, and now of Drumheller. The Heller home has always been a cultural centre of the community and although they retired to Grande Prairie in 1962 they have retained all their old friends and made many new ones.

Ed has always been athletic. As a wrestler he reached the finals in the 3rd Division overseas and was slated for the Canadian Corps finals but this was cancelled for front line duty. As a 440 yard runner he was champion at Calgary, Edmonton and Overseas. He competed freely in local sports days and during two years service in the Veterans' Guard during World War II. He served on the Appleton School Board and the Divisional School Board and has been active in the Legion and the U.F.A. He recalls that in 1923 he was called upon to run the old IHC one-lunger engine at the Experimental Farm — an engine no one else could understand. For three days he made \$6.00 a day, truly the wages of a specialist.

#### **WILLOWLodge CHAPTER I.O.D.E.**

The Willowlodge Chapter I.O.D.E. was organized during the summer of 1915. As the members were from a wide area covering the Red Willow and the Beaverlodge Valleys, the name "Willowlodge" was chosen. Their motto: "Success comes not by wishing but by hard work bravely done," was chosen. During the First World War knitting and other work was done for those in the Armed Services.

On July 12, 1920 the Chapter applied for its Charter, which was granted by the National Chapter in Toronto, on April 4, 1921 with the following charter members: Mrs. Eliza McNaught, Miss Isabel McNaught, Mrs. Sarah Cleland, Mrs. Jennie McNeil, Mrs. Bertha Chambers, Miss Pearl Cleland, Mrs. Marie Tyrrell, Mrs. Susan K. Allison, Mrs. Daisy Dixon, Mrs. Annie Lock.

In the early 1920's the Chapter instituted and sponsored the District Nursing Service. Clinics for children

were held at the McNaught home and in the Rio Grande school with Dr. Carlisle and Nurse Watherston in attendance.

Awards and pins were given to honor students in the local schools.

After continuous active Service in Education, Services at Home and Abroad etc, the Chapter celebrated its 50th Anniversary on April 2, 1971, with the Provincial president and some 60 people in attendance. At this time a bookcase and an oil painting by artist Miss E. McNaught were presented to the Beaverlodge Hospital, to which much of the work of the Chapter has been directed during their years of operation.

Present projects of the Chapter are the sponsoring of the Candy Stripers at the hospital and the awards given through the Western Board of Music, to local students in piano and theory. One source of funds is the annual Military whist, an evening of neighbored sociability. It has become an institution and has done much to strengthen ties within the Community. It is not a project in itself but the results foster the true spirit of the I.O.D.E.

#### **ALEX (SCOTTY) IRVINE**

Scotty Irvine was born in Dunfermline, Scotland. He came over the Edson Trail to Beaverlodge in 1913 from Outlook, Saskatchewan. Scotty homesteaded the SW 33-71-10, which he farmed until the 1920's. Then he sold the land and returned to Saskatchewan. Scotty was a good worker and a good piper.

The story is told of Scotty and Reg Leake out cutting logs on the Jackpine Ridge. Both were quite green in the bush. After chopping on the trees for a while Reg asked Scotty which way his tree was going to fall. Scotty replied, "How the hell do I know. I'm no bloody prophet!"

#### **JOHN JOHN**

Another family who came from Nanaimo, B.C. was Mr. and Mrs. John and son Edwin. John John's sister was the wife of Dr. O'Brien.

Mr. John walked in from Edmonton first in 1907 and returned with the family in 1911. They took up a scrip and homestead and contributed much to the community. Mrs. John was a member of the Halcourt Ladies' Aid. Edwin, their son attended the Appleton school when it opened and Mr. John is remembered for his singing and ready wit.

When Mr. John was digging their well, Mrs. John hoisted up the earth as he dug. Finally, after 60 feet or so, he came to coal and water. Being a mining engineer before homesteading, he wanted to go deeper and investigate the coal seam. Mrs. John however said she had hoisted enough. They had got water and that was it.

After proving up the land they returned to Mountain Park, Alberta where he had been in business before. Some years later Mr. John died there.

Edwin returned to the farm after he grew up and farmed for years, owning the first combine in the district. He married Regina Carter of the Rio Grande area. They had three children. Edwin died suddenly on his farm near Beaverlodge in 1959.

John, the oldest is in Anchorage with his wife Helen and is employed by Western Geophysical.

Lorraine and her three girls, Robin, Regina and Summer live in Fort St. John. Lorraine owns a telephone answering service.

Edwin the youngest son, his wife Mary and their two children Craig and daughter Darcy live in Fort St. John. Edwin has been the owner of Fort Pharmacy for the past 17 years.

#### OLE JOHNSON

Ole (Whistling) Johnson came from White Earth, North Dakota about 1916 and homesteaded N.E. 32-71-10. He died about 1920 and left his land to a brother-in-law in southern Alberta. This land was sold for outstanding taxes \$120.00 plus \$100.00 in about 1928 to L. L. Bolton.

#### ARNOLD KERKHECKER — by Madeline Chambers

Arnold Kerkhecker walked in over the Edson Trail with Arthur Tyrrell and a Baptist minister. However, at some point he played out and had to hail the stage coach. He homesteaded east of Charlie McNaught and worked out most of the time. He was of German descent and was known by neighbors to drop in at meal time unannounced, criticize the meal and tell how much better he had fared elsewhere. Usually he rode a big white horse, which the wolves and coyotes could spot readily, hence he did not get much game.

Arnold retired to the Vancouver area and took over a trucking business from Joe Wheeler. His whereabouts afterwards are not known and it is presumed that he returned to Germany.

One evening he dropped in at McNaughts for a visit and there found Mrs. Lewis, who also had been visiting, about to go home. On a dare, someone suggested that Arnold see the lady home, as it was dark. He was too polite to beg out. Shortly afterwards at a bee at the Halcourt church, Arnold was asked to sing but unfortunately all his songs were in German, so John John volunteered, in improvised German:

“The moon was shining bright  
The stars were looking down  
The night I saw the widow home  
— and three additional verses

#### ANDY AND JIM LAING

Andy and Jim Laing came from the land of the heather and worked on the Grand Trunk Railway as section foremen.

They worked on the Edson Trail under Engineer McQuarrie until it was finished. Coming in with Alex Ray, Andy had his homestead proved up in 1914.

Andy served Overseas in World War I. While there he met Hannah Ross McKenzie, a nurse and they were married in Inverness in 1919.

She came as a war bride and soon entered into the life of the community, entertaining in her home and was active with church work.

Andy was much in demand as an accordion player and delighted many an audience with the Harry Lauder songs. Jim was an accomplished piper and frequently the neighbors could hear him play from a distance in the evenings.

For many years Andy was foreman for the



Mr. and Mrs. Andy Laing, Mr. and Mrs. John Dewar and son, Bud, and Mrs. Dan MacIntosh.

municipality in the Halcourt district seeing to the maintenance of our roads and culverts. Tamarac logs were hauled from the bush for culvert and bridge building.

Andy died in 1942. Mrs. Laing stayed a few more years in the district after his death. She donated money to buy new pews for the United Church up on the hill that she loved so well. This was a bequest in her will revealed after she passed away in Scotland, a reminder and a nice memory. Mrs. Laing returned to her old home at Portmahomock in the Highlands and died ten years later. They had no children.

#### LEONARD AND GRACE MACKIE

The Mackies, Leonard Ross and Grace Lee with children Jean and Douglas came from Paris, Ontario in April, 1928. At Wembley they were met by their cousin, Charles McNaught who brought them to his farm.

The residences on former Fred Dixon and Foy farms nearby became their temporary home until their own house was completed on land purchased from Mr. Curtis. Trees were cleared by hand and horse. Leonard's thorough farming produced excellent crop yields.

Mrs. Mackie was an Appleton school trustee for several years, active in Willow Lodge Chapter I.O.D.E. and Anglican W.A. when the church was located on the McNaught farm as well as in Beaverlodge.

Jean and Douglas graduated from the Beaverlodge High school as so many from Appleton did. They travelled by horse or bicycle and batched or boarded to obtain their education.

During one summer when the Monkman Pass Highway Association was road building the highway, Jean assisted Chrissie Monkman in the camp kitchen.



Several months spent at the cottage maternity hospital in the log house on the "old town" hill aroused Jean's interest in nursing and she went on to train at the Royal Alexandra hospital in Edmonton.

Following nursing at several locations and courses at Toronto, McGill and the University of Washington, she has been teaching nursing and has been associated with the development of new college type programs in Ontario, B.C. and Alberta. Her home is in Calgary.

From high school Doug joined the R.C.A.F., trained as an air navigator and spend 15 months overseas. While in his freshman year at U. of A., he was the first recipient of the W. D. Albright Memorial Scholarship for students in agriculture. After several years at the home farm he became an inspector with Canada Agriculture and is now in charge of the Calgary office for the Plant Products Division. Doug and his wife Qula make their home in Calgary.

Grace and Leonard sold the farm in 1959 and they retired to Calgary. Grace passed away in January 1963. At 88 Leonard is still interested in farm news and neighbours.



Mesdames Johnston, Mortwedt and Mackie taking time off.

### DANIEL F. MACKINTOSH

A native of Inverness, Scotland, Daniel immigrated to Canada in 1910 and settled in Winnipeg where he worked at his trade as a house painter until 1914. In October of that year he walked in over the Edson Trail and filed on his homestead, the N.E. 6-72-10-W6, three and one half miles west of the old town of Beaverlodge.

Daniel stayed on his homestead until the spring of 1915, when he headed back to Winnipeg and enlisted with the 43rd Battalion Cameron Highlanders and served overseas until the end of the war.

While on leave in Scotland, he married Miss Bella Watson of Nairn and returned with his wife to Canada. They took up residence on their homestead.

During his four years residence he constructed buildings and broke enough land to prove up his homestead. In 1923 he decided to sell out. He moved with his family to California and went back to work at his trade in San Francisco. On retirement he resided with his son George, his wife having passed away some years previously. He passed away January 5, 1974 at the age of 89 years. Two other members of the family, son Jim and daughter Edith, Mrs. J. W. Warmoth live at Millbrae, California.

### THE MACKINTOSH FAMILY

James Mackintosh Senior was born in Inverness, Scotland in 1850. After the death of his wife, he emigrated to Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1912 with his daughter Isabella. He was employed as a carpenter in Winnipeg until 1914. In August of that year he left for Edmonton accompanied by Isabella. There she was married to John Dewar. After the wedding they all went on to Edson where they outfitted for the long journey by wagon to Beaverlodge.

Mr. Mackintosh filed on the SE 5-72-10-W6 and resided with his son Jim who had already built a log cabin. Although he was 64 years of age when he homesteaded he took an active part in helping prove up his quarter and his skill as a carpenter was invaluable in the erecting of buildings. In later years he moved to Lower Beaverlodge to stay with his sons, Dave and Jim. There he passed away in February 1934, at the age of 83 years.

James died in 1936. The date of Jack's death in the United States is uncertain. Daniel lives in California and Dave in the Senior Citizens Apartments in Beaverlodge.

Dave's career at the Research Station is well known for his enthusiastic, untiring efforts to grow flowers and more flowers.

### DAVID L. McCARTER

David McCarter came from Ontario where he had been a butcher. He filed on his homestead in July 1911 and farmed there for many years. He took an active part in community affairs and served on the school board for a long time. He kept the log school whitewashed and gave enthusiastic support to school activities.

He had kept in touch with two sisters and other relatives in Toronto.

Besides his community efforts, Dave is remembered in other ways. He usually drove a team of bay horses which identified him on the road.

Once he was short of funds and equipment and it was time to plough the summerfellow. He decided to borrow a plough. He spent a day looking for the plough — the next to get it repaired. And the next day the owner wanted it back. "Doesn't pay to borrow!" mused Dave.

Dave tired of batching so hired a housekeeper from Grande Prairie. The lady tired of the long, untidy hair and when Dave was asleep, docked it to ears length. When Dave woke he was furious and took the lady to Beaverlodge, where he gave Joey Carrell \$10.00 to take her on to Grande Prairie. Do present-day hippies have such spunk?

He was sick for some time and stayed at McNeils before going into the Grande Prairie hospital, where he died.

### GEORGE MARTIN'S STORY

I was born in England, and as my parents died when I was very young I came to Canada as a landed immigrant in 1907, a few months before my 15th birthday.

In 1908 I joined a chartered bank and after working in various branches in the Eastern Townships, I volunteered for service in the west. In 1911 I was told



Sunday afternoon at McNaughts. Included are George Martin, Cliff Stacey, Sam Martin, Jim Dixon, Percy Hunkin.

to report in Winnipeg. In 1912, with the opening of the Peace River country, I put my name down for another move and in August, 1913 I set out for Lake Saskatoon by way of Athabasca, Smith, Grouard and Dunvegan. It was a wonderful trip, a real holiday. I reached Lake Saskatoon on September 7 and reported as a new clerk.

I loved the country and the people. Soon I purchased a horse and saddle. Later I bought another horse when he threw his rider in a race; he was so angry that I was able to buy horse and saddle right off the track. On one occasion I was riding along the Mountain Trail leading my extra horse, packed with my heavy sweater rolled around a dozen oranges, a very rare item in those days and a big box of chocolates for a friend, Marion MacNaught. A black bear frightened the lead horse which broke loose. As I was trying to catch him my other horse bolted too. I walked back to Lake Saskatoon and later the horses turned up safely. Several days later Bill Lowe was heard telling what a wonderful country this was where not "milk and honey" but oranges and chocolates could be found. Marion got most of her oranges.

I was at Lake Saskatoon until 1915. When the first recruiting mission came there I enlisted and was stationed in Edmonton. The day I enlisted I filed on SE 15-71-10, known as the Church of England Quarter, as the Church owned ten acres of this land. Later I was able to buy this ten acres from the church.

In December 1915 I obtained special leave and came back to Beaverlodge. According to my diary I had become engaged to Marion MacNaught on September 1, 1915. On December 30, 1915 we were married in the little church of St. Marks. Marion was the eldest of the four daughters of Charles and Eliza McNaught and had accompanied her parents to this new country in 1912, coming from Paris, Ontario. Ours was the first wedding in this church. Our girls were christened there and on our 54th wedding anniversary our first great-grandchild, Darryll Martin was the last baby to be baptized in this church. It had been moved to Hythe with the coming of the railroad.

Unfortunately, travel was slow by sleigh in the winter time and I was well overdue when I returned to the barracks. However, when my commanding officer heard why I was so late he said that they needed men with the nerve to get married and I was let off lightly. I was given permission to be absent from the barracks at night so Marion joined me in Edmonton and we had a wonderful time until April, 1916 when Marion left for home. On April 21 I entrained for Halifax and on the evening of May 6, 1916 we landed in Liverpool after an uneventful voyage.

Marion came overseas early in 1917 and stayed with my brother and his wife while she worked in a munitions factory while her only brother John and I were over where the fighting was. John was badly gassed and sent back to England and later taught in the Khaki College.

I was wounded on November 10, 1917 but was back with my battalion on January 3, 1918. On August 8, 1918 I was awarded the Military Medal at Amiens.

On the day of the Armistice, Marion arranged for her passage home but I went back to Germany and did not receive my discharge until April 23, 1919.

We lived at Lake Saskatoon until 1921 and here our daughter Peggy was born. After a brief stay at Pouce Coupe, we were transferred to Delia where Janet was born. Later I was manager at Monitor. When the depression came we moved again to Edmonton as many of the country branches were being closed. The Second World War followed the Depression and when things began looking better in 1949, I became manager of new branch in Edmonton. In 1952 I retired and we came back here to live. We were able to purchase 20 acres and the buildings on the Tom Watt land. We sold the ten acres to Marion's sisters who built on our building site and are our nearest neighbours.

Both girls finished school in Edmonton. Peggy became a teacher in the Grande Prairie School Division. In 1943 she married Sam Martin, a Beaverlodge boy who was in the army at the time. When Sam was sent overseas, she came to live with us. He was in the landing on D-Day, the day their first son was born. Peggy taught in Edmonton until Sam returned and then they came back to Beaverlodge, where Sam works for the Department of National Defense at the Base on Mount Saskatoon. Four of their six children are married and two are still at university. They have two grandchildren.

Their children are George with Proctor and Gamble married to Karen Stith. They have two children Darryl and Erin. Peter, with Engineering Consultants, is married to Eileen Jewitt, a dietetic technician. They live in Dawson Creek. Jamie, partsman for I.H.C. in Grande Prairie married Eleanor Scorgie who has a degree in Household Economics and is working at the Grande Prairie Hospital. Douglas is at the University of Victoria, enrolled in his absorbing interest, Oceanography. Janet or Jansie, a business graduate from Junior College married Bill Jones, the Wheat Pool agent at Dimsdale. Sarah, an excellent swimmer, has taught synchronized programs and done lifeguard duty at the Beaverlodge Pool presently is enrolled in Education at the University of Alberta.



Janet received her Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Alberta. She worked as a Cost Accountant for the American Army for a while during the building of the Alaska Highway. Later she returned to the University for her Bachelor of Education degree. She taught first in Grande Prairie, then Athabasca before returning to University for her Master's degree in Education. While teaching in Dawson Creek, B.C. she met George Hartford, a veteran of the Air Force. After they were married they lived in Victoria and Trail before returning to Dawson Creek where George is the principal of the High School. Their four children are still in school and very active in swimming, figure skating, and hockey. Nicola is in high school, Bobby in junior high, Douglas and Crosbie in elementary school. They are all skilled swimmers. To this Bob adds hockey, Nicola and Doug figure skating and Crosbie interested in everything and everyone in her circle.

It is very wonderful to have the entire family in this area. We all sit down together for dinner on Christmas Day and open our presents together as we have done for more than 50 years, and a new generation will soon be swimming down at "The River" where their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents spent so many happy times.

#### CHARLES AND ELIZA MacNAUGHT — by Euphemia (Betty) MacNaught

Eliza and Charles MacNaught left Glenmorris, Ontario in June 1911 to visit a brother, Sam MacNaught, who in 1909 had taken up land near the Red Willow river. Recently the family has reverted to the form of the family name used prior to coming to the Peace.

They bought a team of oxen and supplies in Edson in preparation for the trip over the trail. They joined the Charles Robertsons, later of Hythe and the Cranston family of Hermit Lake. People usually travelled in groups in order to have help in case of trouble or for the purpose of doubling up on steep hills or in mud holes. In about three weeks time the party arrived in Grande Prairie, and mother and father went on to brother Sam's place.

They, too filed on a homestead near the Red Willow river and bought South African scrip, three miles south of the Beaverlodge river. Father said, "When looking for land, pick an area, not too low, with some northeastern exposure, and dark soil, free from stones." The land that he chose had all these qualities. They stayed for two weeks with the Sam MacNaughts before returning to Edson and home.

During this time, John, the only son, having finished his course at the Faculty of Education in the University of Toronto and Marion the eldest daughter, were left in charge of the Glenmorris farm, with some help from the other members of the family, Margaret, Isabel and Euphemia (Betty). The next year, following a partial sale our family left Ontario for "the West", leaving behind Margaret and Isabel at school in Paris, Ontario.

A box car was rented to carry settlers' effects to Edson. This box car was shared with the Dan Chambers family, from Hamilton. The livestock included two Percheron horses, two cows of Dan



The Charles MacNaughts and the Dan Chambers on the Edson Trail. Charles MacNaught (L), Betty MacNaught, Ted Chambers, Mrs. MacNaught, Rhea Chambers and Marion MacNaught (R).



Isabel Perry hosting sister Marion, Annabelle Funnell and little visitors.



Liza and Charles MacNaught and granddaughters, Peggy Martin and Janet Hartford.

Chambers, our three cows, a Shorthorn, a Holstein and a Guernsey, eight blue Andalusian hens and a rooster. Father selected three breeds of cattle as he was not sure which would be the best type for the "North West."

We left Edson in June with a party of other settlers, the Chambers family, the Pipers from Texas, and three Irish men, Charlie Gould and Fred and George Balmer.





The Charles MacNaught farmstead.

In six weeks time we arrived at our present home about noon. Father stepped down from the wagon, found a little iron corner post, read it, and said, "If I read this right, we are home."

We crossed over to a stretch of open prairie, leading down to our little lake to make camp. By the time the kettle was boiling Mrs. Mortwedt, our nearest neighbor came over with a green salad from their garden, in a cut glass bowl. Two other neighbours from a few miles away rode on their horses to visit us as they had heard that there was a new skirt in the valley.

A tent and a corral soon made us feel settled, but not so with the stock. The rooster was restless and wouldn't stay at home. The cows would leave in the morning and walk all day before we could find them to bring them back at night.

That first summer was new, warm and exciting. John and Roy Maus from Paris rode in from Edmonton by way of the Swan Hills during the summer holidays. They stayed but a short time as John had to return to Carberry where he was teaching. We were able to keep the two saddle horses but they sold the little pack pony.

Marion taught the first school across the Beaverlodge river, for a short time that year, in the Methodist Church, where it still stands on Halcourt Hill. The school supplies were scanty and our black buggy duster made a good blackboard.

Father cleared out a wagon road on the road allowance in order to pick out a building site. Until this time, a nearby trail angled towards Halcourt. A spot was chosen in a grove of large trees and an experienced log man, "Armstrong" Johnson helped put up a large log house, with a flat pole and sod roof, which was later replaced by an upstairs and a shingle roof.

The next year father went again to Edson with the oxen to meet his sister, Jane MacNaught and Margaret and Isabel. While he was in Edson, father arranged to travel with two French Canadians, Michaud and Thibideau who were also travelling with oxen. The Frenchmen's oxen, Jack and John had the distinction of wearing leather horse nets to ward off mosquitoes and bull dogs while ours had to make out with gunny sack coverings.

Our floor was made of poles as lumber was a long ways away. In preparation for the arrival of the rest of the family we had laid a rug over the pole floor; this camouflage was not a success as the newcomers hadn't had months of practice on a crooked pole underlay.

Transportation was a problem to some and a pleasure to others. Marion and Margaret went everywhere on their horses, Ginger and Napoleon, also Isabel and Betty to some extent as they had to ride double on their pony Lexie. Our Aunt, who had been an excellent rider in Ontario refused to ride astride. Riding with stirrups, both on one side, on a western saddle was not good but she managed and on that improvised side saddle made many pleasant journeys between her brothers' farms.

John went overseas with the 196 University Battalion of Winnipeg, from Pilot Mound where he taught high school. He was gassed at the front near Vimy and was sent to England and while convalescing taught in the Khaki College there.

Upon his return, he joined father on the farm. Later he taught as principal of the Lake Saskatoon Consolidated School and the Beaverlodge High school, but for a short time only as owing to the effects of the gas, outside work proved to be better for him.

John was an enthusiastic supporter of the Monkman Pass Association and served as secretary for most of its period of activity. He and Noel Cameron from New



Zealand were married in 1959. Noel lived on a ranch near the village of Turakina, 18 miles from the larger center, Wanganui. She attended the private school of Nga Tawa, 11 miles away. She enjoyed her horses and rode in many jumping events of that area. Later she took nurse's training, before her travels brought her to Beaverlodge.

Marion taught for a short time at the Lake Saskatchewan Public school before the time of its consolidation and also at the Wapiti school.

Marion and George Martin were married at St. Mark's Anglican Church in Appleton during the first world war when George was on leave from the 66 Battalion in Edmonton.

Margaret graduated from the Calgary Normal school in time to open classes in the newly built school in Appleton. Following that time, she was principal of the Clairmont school and at Wembley. Short or long terms were spent at many schools within the county as well as several years at Delia, in southern Alberta. She retired from Hythe where she had been teaching in the junior high.

Margaret had taken courses at Summer school in art and drama, and enjoyed the fun and variety of the Christmas concerts and adult drama wherever she went.

Isabel also taught in various schools from Clairmont to Craigellachie before her marriage to Judson Perry. She returned to teaching after the death of her husband and finally taught in Beaverlodge where she and her daughter Liza made their home.

Betty taught for two years at Appleton before attending the Ontario College of Art in Toronto. She graduated after four years of study, receiving the A.O.C.A. standing and taught at Mount Royal College and the Ontario Ladies' College in Whitby.

Our mother had many plans for new activities. She helped to organize the Willow Lodge I.O.D.E. and to install the district nursing service. She was happy to be given a life membership in the Anglican W.A. Mother and father enjoyed preparing for and having the annual garden party on the farm grounds, where there was room for tennis and basketball courts as well as a small area for clock golf. The W.A. or the I.O.D.E. prepared the supper and the summer evening would end with a program made possible by the people that gladly shared their talents.

Dave Allison, a close neighbour, wrote these lines after our father's death — "Whenever Charles MacNaught came among men he brought June sunshine, and made even desponding and surly men feel that a fuller and warmer summer was at hand."

By 1974 many changes have taken place in our family. Jane MacNaught died in 1930, our father in 1937 and our mother in 1952. John and Margaret died suddenly, about five months apart in 1970. Isabel and Betty live near the old home on the ridge between the Red Willow and Beaverlodge valleys, where St. Mark's church used to stand, and just across the highway from George and Marion Martin.

The MacNaught home always opened its doors to the newcomer. Always has there been time for a visit and a cup of tea no matter how busy they might be. A

warm welcome radiated from their home. For young people away from home, it was another home.

We would be remiss if it were not mentioned that the MacNaught home has been a social and cultural center of the community and that all the family have made worthwhile contributions. John, Margaret and Isabel were outstanding teachers and Betty is recognized as a foremost Alberta artist.

#### JAMES D. MOORE

Jim Moore came from Montana in 1917, coming all the way with his horses and wagon. He homesteaded N.W. 6-72-10 and lived in Alex Dewar's shack until he built his own. Jim was a great lover of cats and owned about 12, all of which stayed in his shack with him. About 1925 Jim decided farming in the Peace River area was not for him. He had Mrs. Martin make a cover for his wagon out of flour sacks. With a team hitched to it and leading three more horses behind, he drove all the way back to Montana.

#### THE MORTWEDT STORY — By Dorothy and Ethel

Hilmer and Sophie (Larson) Mortwedt met and were married in North Dakota. They moved to Seattle and from there to Edson where their first son, Jess was born.

In 1912 they left Edson by covered wagon for Beaverlodge where they homesteaded on property later purchased by Tom Watt and now owned by George and Marion Martin.

Their second child, Norah was born in Beaverlodge. In 1914 they went back to North Dakota where Don, Doris and Dorothy were born. In 1921 they returned to Beaverlodge where John and Ethel were born.

Dad worked some of those early winters for the ED & BC as it was pushing its way north. He laid down tracks with the crew until the cook quit and the boss asked if anyone could cook or would attempt it. Dad thought that it would be warmer work. He told the boss he would try it but if he got any complaints he would quit. Apparently things went well as he spent the rest of the winter cooking. He said they had plenty of meat, dried apples and prunes, potatoes and flour but no fresh fruit or vegetables. At this time mother was on the farm with the children.



Birthday party in 1933, Dora Willis, Dorothy Mortwedt, Geraldine Proud, Iva Carrell, Mina Pool, Alona Proud, Rhoda Patterson, Isobel Dewar, Annie Lowen, Eleanor Loven, Edna, Marion and Beth Heller.

Dad and mother had a dog called Kayrut that they thought a lot of. I don't suppose at that time there were many dogs around and perhaps they were a little difficult to obtain. It was a sad day when the dog was mistaken for a coyote and was shot.

We remember dad telling a couple of incidents, one about finding a stream, looking it over and deciding it was nice and clean and of course, drinking from it, then walking up stream and discovering a small waterfall over a dead and decaying horse.

Another one was about horses he bought for \$300 in Edmonton when he made a trip out for supplies. On the way back to Beaverlodge the horses were frightened by bears and started running. The one being used for a pack horse had the pack slip. It started kicking and cut the tendons of his foot so dad had to shoot him. He then had to pack the supplies on the remaining horse and walk the remaining many miles.

Another time he met up with some settlers and was invited by them to travel along with them, which he did. They cut pine or spruce boughs and put their blanket rolls down on that for a bed, combining all of their blankets for one bed. Dad slept in the middle. They kept squeezing in towards the middle for warmth as the night got colder until he couldn't stand it any longer. He said it was like "being packed in a sardine can" so he got up. The horses were cold and restless, the temperature being about 40 degrees below zero. They broke camp and resumed their journey.

As the Appleton school was about four miles away, dad sold the homestead and bought another quarter as soon as one near the school was available. When we were ready for High School we rode or drove to Beaverlodge.

During World War II Jess and John enlisted in Canada and Donald in the United States. Jess was killed during the war, John returned safely after many months of active service overseas as a pilot, then was killed in a plane crash on an airforce mission to the far north. Donald served in the American Air Force, and now in managing two radio stations in Mennonmanic, Wisconsin.

Mother died while we were still on the farm and dad died in a nursing home in Calgary in 1972. Jean and Doug Mackie were certainly wonderful to him.



Birthday party, 1940. Dorothy Mortwedt, Geraldine Proud, Alona Proud, Rhoda Patterson, Isobel Dewar, Eleanor Loven, Edna, Marion and Beth Heller.

Doris is married and lives in North Dakota. Dorothy Snudden is living near St. Louis and Ethel Spiker is in Kansas City. Norah is married and living in Chetwynd.

When Hilmer was alone on the farm in his later years, Ruth Bristow would occasionally bring in lunch. When she was about to pour the tea, Hilmer would put his hand over the cup and explain, "Just wait until the water takes hold of the tea." When neighbors dropped in at meal time and he was short of food, he remarked, "All we have in the house is envelope soup."

When he retired to live in Calgary he refused to sell his land to anyone who didn't love the wild animals and birds. The deer and prairie chicken were not to be taken by the buyer.

Residents of the Appleton district had the greatest respect for Hilmer and Sophie Mortwedt. They were kindly and considerate at all times. Life on the farm was a continuing struggle but they always had time to aid others. Hilmer frequently built chimneys and did repairs beyond the scope of others. It was their tragedy to have lost financially in some of the Bank failures which plagued the United States at the time and thus left them without adequate finances to develop their bush farm.

#### THE DR. O'BRIEN SECTION

One point of interest in the early days of the Appleton district was the "Dr. O'Brien Section". Those who knew Dr. L. J. O'Brien realize that he directed his illustrious medical career to outpost service. He wanted to be a part of the development of the frontier and this brought him to Grande Prairie in 1918. Medicine was his life but he wanted to be with the people and truly became a part of the Peace.

With the help of friends, Fred Dixon and Ellsworth Foy, he secured a section of land on the Appleton ridge overlooking the Halcourt settlement and in full view of the Rockies and engaged his nephews, Austin and Irvin Willis to farm it. Bert Elcombe and Dave Allison brushed it and in the winter of 1919 piled 200 cords of wood in anticipation of a steamer being available to do the breaking. However, the fuel supply went up in flames so Dr. O'Brien bought a Sawyer Massey gas tractor and a two-furrow, 22-inch Van Stayke plough, also a separator and other farm machinery. Over the years several neighbors secured work on the farm, thus providing them with cash to develop their own places.

Austin and Irvin remained there for two years, when Irvin went teaching and Austin moved to his own place. In 1930 Herb O'Brien and his wife Jean (Alexander) took over the farm and built a fine log house. Unfortunately Herb was killed in 1935. Jean and her brother, Bill Alexander carried on until 1943, when she and her three girls moved to Grande Prairie.

#### HARRY PARFREY, WIFE BERTHA AND SON TOM

Harry Parfrey was a native of Somerset, England. Up until his mid-thirties he had worked in the coal mines but was never resigned to this fate. In 1913 he migrated to Canada. On the next boat followed his sweetheart, Bertha Privet, and they were married at Nanaimo, B.C. For two years more coal mining paid





Mother and Dad Parfrey and Tom. 1915.

the rent and the grocery bills, but the damp, dirt and confinement was not for Harry.

On the advice of the mine's doctor, Dr. L. J. O'Brien, who later set up a practice in Grande Prairie, Harry found healthier employment on a homestead, S.W. 13-71-10-W6, in the Two Rivers district.

In 1914 their only son Thomas was born. He took his schooling at the Lower Beaverlodge school. The Parfreys became a part of that community in as much as they attended the church services regularly, and all the school events that called for parental concern. Otherwise they went about tilling the soil and tending cattle and poultry. Harry always had four steers ready for butchering each year and counted himself fortunate that Elias Smith, the local butcher was willing to take them. This transaction was continued later with Brubecker. Harry Parfrey was highly respected in the community for his determination and moral integrity.

Mrs. Parfrey loved her garden and worked outside with her men as much as she could. Having been a laundry maid in England, she too rejoiced in the freedom of the out-of-doors. Son Tom tells that for some years his mother did the laundry and starched the uniforms of the district nurses. Two of the nurses he recalls, were Miss O'Neill and Miss Watherston. He also recalls that "Mother was very handy with her needle". She was a quaint little figure in her bonnet and shawl as she rode proudly with Harry and Tom in the buggy, on their weekly trip to church.

Harry took seriously ill in 1950 and died in Edmonton in 1951. Mrs. Parfrey lived on in the old home and Tom and Alice (Fitzsimmons) who had been married in 1949, kept a good watch on her welfare until her demise in 1954. She was buried in the Halcourt cemetery. Tom and Alice had three daughters, Lorrain, Geraldine and Joan. Tom continues to farm the "old home farm" as he calls it.

#### JUDD AND RUPERT PERRY — by Isabel Perry

Judson and Rupert Perry were born at Cody's, New Brunswick, where their father farmed. After finishing Normal School, Judd came west to Chauvin where his brothers, Pratt and Rupert had come a few years before. Here he taught a short time before enlisting in World War I and going overseas. Rupert also enlisted and went to the front as a lieutenant.

After the war, Judd and Rupert, like many other returned men, came to the Peace River country to



Rupert Perry.



Judd Perry.



Judd Perry on his favorite saddle horse, Ruth.





Rupert Perry fishing below the Red Willow falls.



Miss Arthurette Branscombe.

take up homesteads and soldiers' grants. They lived on Rupert's land just south of Beaverlodge for many years and farmed in partnership.

Judd taught for a few years in various schools, the last two being Gimle and Appleton. Judd was a very sympathetic teacher and most of his students viewed him as an elder brother. In World War I, he was a Sergeant Instructor.

In talking to the children at Appleton one day in the middle twenties, Judd found that hardly any of them had ever seen a train. He arranged to leave a little early one Friday afternoon and take the boys in his car to Wembley to see the train come in. Then the resident Anglican minister, Rev. Innis Law, said he would take the girls in his car. The I.O.D.E. ladies heard of the trip and donated funds for a treat. Dave McCarter, a trustee then made a similar gift on behalf of the school

board. So, with this money, they drove to Grande Prairie, put Mrs. Law and the pupils on the train and drove back to meet them in Wembley. The usual crowd of people at the station stared with amazement when Mrs. Law, so young and carefree, stepped off with nearly 15 children in tow. Before leaving for home the party went to the Chinese restaurant for supper, where a large table was ready for them.

Judd and Rupert both enjoyed farming, their garden, the neighbors and community projects. Threshing, wood-sawing, berry trips and trading work were all part of the good life.

They enjoyed their horses. When many cars were out of commission during the Depression they made riding trips and picnics so much more fun that a riding club was formed. This led to more extensive pack trips to the mountains.

In 1938 Judd and I were married. When he promptly brought home a box of apples I sensed that he thought pie a safer example of my cooking than my cakes to serve to certain of his friends who might come to look the situation over!

A few months later a niece and nephew, Margaret and Sandy Beatty, whose mother had died, came to live with us for a year and a half. Our daughter Elizabeth Ann, joined the family. Then, when she was two years old, Judd died after several months in and out of hospital.

Eventually, Liza and I returned to the MacNaught home and I went back teaching. Fortunately I got a school close enough to be home on the week ends. When Liza was ready to start school we moved to Beaverlodge, where I taught until I retired. Liza took part in all the farm activities and still enjoys her riding. She graduated from the Beaverlodge High School and now, as Mrs. Patrick Johnston is teaching in Vernon, B.C.

After the Monkman Pass road was put through to



within a few miles of the Kinuseo Falls, on the Murray River, Alex Watt, Bruce Albright and Rupert formed a company to start a tourist project at the falls. Stan Halliday and Earl McDonald joined forces with them. They took in a tractor and a portable sawmill to provide lumber and got an expert log man for the building. They soon had a dining hall, cookhouse and several attractive cabins. Carl Brooks brought in an outfit of horses for riding and packing the last few miles and trips on to Monkman Lake. Business flourished for a year or so but was abandoned when World War II broke out. Several of the buildings are still there.

Rupert returned to his farming and now had the four quarters to handle by himself. His half-sister, Arthuretta Branscombe retired from nursing in New York and joined him on the farm where they built a new house. Miss Branscombe made many friends and soon was a vital part of the community.

As the years went by, a nephew, Harold Perry and his wife joined forces with Rupert in farming and added another house to the place. With leisure time, Rupert was able to take a more active part in Legion affairs and to take many extensive fishing trips with his friends.

After a lengthy illness, Miss Branscombe died in 1964. Three years later, Rupert, too, passed away.

#### GEORGE (ALEX) RAY — by Scotty Ray

My father was born in Ontario. He and his parents moved from there to Declair, Manitoba. They settled about two miles from a family, Cowans, from Scotland. Dad met and married their daughter, Margaret Cowan.

After farming there for about 13 years dad decided to move to the much talked about Peace River country. He sold the farm and loaded horses, wagons and whatever was needed on the trail, and with wife and family of five, also mother's brother, Bill Cowan, and dad's father, William (Bill) Ray, my grandfather.

We stayed in Edson for a short time, then on April 15, 1911 started out with the horses and loaded wagons through three feet of snow in the bush over the Edson Trail. We were stuck many times but finally reached the Athabasca River and had to wait there until the ice went out. Dad and mother rented a log cabin from a man named Stevens and we used it as a stopping place for a month. From there we travelled to what was known then as the Baptiste River. We camped for six weeks working on the river hills. There was a surveyor there, A. H. McQuarrie sent from Edmonton to survey the roads, also some scrapers sent out to cut down the hill.

At this time we had to go back to Edson for more supplies. After fighting through muskegs and rivers, we arrived in Grande Prairie in September. There mother and the kids stayed till dad and grandfather found suitable land in the Halcourt district, filing on it September 15, 1911. Dad built a log cabin to live in and cut wild hay for the horses.

In the summer of 1912 more settlers came in and dad found homesteads for some of them, built cabins and put sod roofs on them. He did all kinds of work to make a living. He was foreman on the road building for



Appleton men's basketball team. Back row, l-r: Hugh Gordon, Scotty Ray, Jack Ray. Front row: Davy McLennan, Edwin John, Austin Willis.

a number of years. He also caught a lot of coyotes to help out.

Dad farmed until 1928, then sawed lumber in the Two Rivers district during the winters of 1928 and 1929. He moved into Beaverlodge in the summer of 1929 and had the livery barn, draying and hauled the mail to Halcourt, Elmworth, Hinton Trail, Hazelmere, and Rio Grande post offices.

Dad and mother celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1948. Mother was born June 3, 1878 and passed away, age 73 years, on January 20, 1952. Dad was born June 8th, 1875, passed away, age 84, on June 1, 1960.

Names of the children are: Mary — now married to Austin Willis; William (Scotty) married to Helen Brown; John (Jack) married to Gladys Quinn; Jean married to Lawrence Lock; Edith — deceased in 1928; James (Bob) married to Elsie Olson; Alex married to Thelma Carter; Elva married to Alex Ozust; Melvin (Mel) married to Isabelle Martinson; Robert, deceased 1954, married to Muriel Biesel; Merlin married to Jean Campbell. There are 44 grandchildren and 38 great-grandchildren.

#### “OVER THE EDSON TRAIL” — as told by George Alex Ray in 1950 at the age of 75 years.

In the early spring of 1911 we left Elkhorn, Manitoba and headed west for the much talked of Peace River country to file on land. Accompanying was my wife, Margaret and five children, Mary, Scotty, Jack, Jean, Edith, and my dad, William Ray. Brother-in-law Bill Cowan was also in the group.

On March 24th we arrived in Edson with a carload of horses, machinery, provisions and household effects. After staying there for a month we started over the trail from Edson to Sturgeon Lake. Several days later we arrived at the Athabasca river and bought a team of oxen. We spent another month at the river because there was no ferry. We rented and ran an old stopping place while there.

As soon as the ferry was installed we went as far as the Baptiste river. We had to camp there for two months. We helped build the road and spent one month

or more taking rock out of the river so that the ferry could land. We plowed and scraped the Fraser hill on the north side of the Baptiste river. The job was engineered by A. H. McQuarrie. Here we met Andy Laing and his brother Jim.

There we saw lots of bears, as many as eight at one time. We had three good rifles along to be on the safe side.

One day Margaret and I went up the Fraser hill to put out fish heads as bait for the bears. While doing this we heard a shot back at camp. We hurried back. Benny Foster who was camped nearby and the children were looking at a dead bear. They had been cooking soup and the bear had gone into the tent and taken the soup bone out of the pot. It was too hot and he dropped it. Benny shot it as it was coming out of the tent.

From the Baptiste river we headed north across the Little Smoky and on to Tony river. We had several problems on the way. Coming to one of the steep hills our oldest boy, Scotty was driving the oxen — they started to run and he couldn't hold them. I told him to jump so he wrapped the lines around the stake and jumped. The oxen and the wagon all piled up at the bottom of the hill over the side of a bridge. The oxen got hurt but all, including supplies were salvaged. An axle was broken on the wagon and I sent to Edson for repairs. A few days later the parts arrived but there was one problem, the wheel kept falling off because there was a right and left hand thread on the axle. Both nuts were right-hand threads.

We got stuck in a muskeg for two days and had to use a block and tackle to get through. While doing this one oxen got down nearly out of sight in the mud. We put a block and tackle on him to pull him out and pulled one of his horns off before finally getting him to safety.

After getting through that muskeg, we soon arrived at another one. We put three teams on a block and tackle for half a mile before both wagons got through. Margaret didn't think the oxen were doing their share so she went up and hit them. The anchor pulled out, the cable caught her and threw her into the air, landing her over in the bush on her feet but she was hurt never-the-less.

After crossing the Tony river, we journeyed on to the half-way house where we stayed for two days. While there we killed a calf, cooked it with salt and onions and packed it away. Taft, the stage driver came along. Everyone was comfortably lying on a mattress in the swamp. One wagon was about 200 yards from where we were sleeping — stuck in the mud. We could reach off the mattress into the mossy swamp with a cup and get a good drink of water after straining the bugs and wigglers out.

Taft asked if we had any meat we could exchange for bacon. We gave him some meat and on his next trip he brought back some bacon. He inquired about the meat he had been given since it had made him sick and he was unable to cover many miles the next day. I told him it was veal he had been eating.

When we arrived at Sturgeon lake, the horses and oxen were in very bad shape. To rest the animals we camped there for one week.

Starting out again we travelled to Hay Camp where we met Ace Hunting. From Hay Camp we moved on to the Smoky river and we were forced to stay there two to three weeks again because of no ferry. After the ferry was installed, we were the second team to cross. We went half way up the Smoky Hill and camped there for the night with Tom Metcalf and family.

Although we had lost several horses on the way we finally arrived at Prairie City and camped at Bear Creek. We hired a couple of saddle horses and rode out to the Red Willow to look for land.

After finding suitable land we returned to Prairie City to file on S.W. ¼-16-71-10-W6. We were one of the first land seekers in the district later known as Halcourt.

I had one ton of flour when we left Edson and 1100 pounds when we left Bear Creek.

We drove on to Lake Saskatoon and then to the Red Willow, arriving there September 15. So after six months of rugged travelling we had finally reached our destination.

We had very little room in our tent and the settlers were few. My wife was confined to bed from being hurt internally in the accident at the muskeg. Walter Chapman rode one of my horses 40 miles for Doctor Bradford at Lake Saskatoon. The doctor couldn't find one of his horses so they hitched Walter's horse with one of the doctor's and drove back. Two neighbour women, Mrs. Bob Shaw and Mrs. William Bernard saved my wife's life but we lost the baby.

I buried the baby myself and got as near as I could to what a minister would say in the way of prayers.

One of the many stories about Alex and his family goes thus: Alex Ray asked at Gaudin's Store for a sack full of rubber boots. "Any and all sizes will do. They'll be sure to fit some of the family!"

#### THE DAVE ROSS STORY

David Ross was born in Scotland and in 1928 with his parents, came to Kelwood, Manitoba. In 1929 he came to Beaverlodge where he worked for Andy Laing. He joined the army in 1941 and spent several years overseas. On returning he farmed the Andy Laing place in the summer and curled in the winter. Later he bought the Laing farm together with the Walter Chapman place. December 24, 1946 he married Anne Hume and they were blessed with two sons, Cameron and Laurie. Cameron is married and lives in Edmonton. Laurie and his family live in Shearwater, Nova Scotia and he is in the navy. Dave and Anne are retired and live in Edmonton.

Friends of Annie Hume tell of her genuine interest in people and her light-hearted attitude towards life. She worked hard wherever she was and always had a host of friends. We trust that Annie has retained that warm interest and will return to Beaverlodge on occasion even though it is just to cheer us up.

#### THE SHARP FAMILY — by Norah Aveling

My maiden name was Norah Sharp. I was one of five children of Thomas Henry and Mary Sharp. I had a sister and 3 brothers. My sister Nancy was the eldest in the family, then Clayton, Jack, and Madill, with myself bringing up the rear. We lived in Cloverdale,



B.C., for the first 13 years of my life, then moved to Beaverlodge in 1929 because my dad felt this was where the opportunities were for his family. Dad, Clayton and Madill preceded mother and me by a few months, driving up in an old Dodge Touring. Mother and I came by train with mother getting me on for half price by not quite telling the truth about my age. Our first temporary home was a little one-room cabin owned by the Wertz brothers, where we slept on the floor in bed-rolls. One harrowing experience happened one fall when mother hid the family savings in a bed-roll. My brother, Clayton, unaware of this, got up in the small hours of the morning and took the blankets out on a threshing job. It ended happily when Clayton found the money, much to my mother's relief.

Dad bought the quarter of land that the Appleton School was on and he built a barn and a one-room log cabin. We lived there until he could get enough lumber to build a three-room house. We all spent many happy, and sometimes not so happy, hours at Appleton school. The school-house was the meeting place for most of the local folk for their weekend entertainment. There we had our concerts, and dances, with all the talent each and everyone could add and all for ten cents. As a child I well remember the stove in the center of the building, with a big boiler of hot cocoa, always a welcome sight on the cold, cold days. I remember the crush I had as a young school girl on our handsome teacher, Judd Perry. I can still see him sitting very relaxed in his chair with his feet up on the big desk in front of him teaching in his own fashion the things we were to carry with us the rest of our lives.

In those days, my folks sold dressed turkeys and chicken for 50¢ a piece, eggs at one cent a dozen. I can remember the time my dad shipped a load of oats to Edmonton and ended up owing the railroad for the freight. We always had the best in food but there were times when clothing was a problem. Despite the depression mother did an excellent job of feeding the family. She, like most of the women, made use of all the wild fruit which the children helped her pick. Our dirt-cellar shelves were always packed with preserves and pickles, which were welcome in the long winters.

One very amusing incident happened. As did everyone, we had outside plumbing and when ours was built the door was installed to open in, instead of out. One night a neighbor who, to put it mildly, was very tubby, left to make a necessary visit and didn't return. Worried, my mother went out to inquire what had happened and, finding the predicament our friend was in, had to call the men out to take the door off. They freed one half-frozen and very embarrassed lady.

After 4 years, my brothers tiring of farm life, and my dad getting too old to go it alone, my folks decided to move back to Vancouver. My sister Nancy was married and the rest of us eventually found jobs in the city — Clayton (B.C. Hydro), Jack (iron worker), Madill (B.C. Telephone) and I began a 6-year telephone operator career. My dad died in 1954 at the good age of 93. Mother died in 1969 at the age of 86.

The years my brothers and my sister and I spent in Beaverlodge were the impressionable years of youth. While these were not easy years, they did make us into good future citizens.

A great sadness in all our lives was the sudden death of our brother Clayton in 1971. The rest of us are still happily married and busy enjoying our own families. My husband and I have just celebrated our 30th Wedding anniversary and God willing looking forward to many more happy years.

#### ARTHUR AND MARIE TYRRELL — by Madeline Chambers

Arthur and Marie Tyrrell emigrated from England in 1907 to Brandon, where two of their three children were born.

My father was anxious to get a homestead and start farming and decided that the best way to see the country and get experience was to go on a harvest excursion. He spent most of his first winter in Canada convalescing from typhoid fever, and with the extreme cold weather, they were quite discouraged. A friend suggested they try Vancouver, so in March they took off. They were all happy with the milder climate.

In 1914 my father and four companions walked with packs on their backs from Edson to Beaverlodge. He filed on a homestead southwest of Beaverlodge which had a very picturesque spruce bush on the west side and a spring that angled across the south. He worked for farmers and got out logs to build a house and barn.

In 1916 he sent for his family. He looked after the Fred Dixon farm while they visited relatives at White Rock, B.C. They returned in March and mother and we three children accompanied them. They could only buy tickets as far as Spirit River and dad was to meet us there. The railway had just been completed to Grande Prairie and Mr. Dixon thought we should go on and he wired dad of the change in plans. Dad drove all the way to Spirit River and couldn't find us, so drove home again. He received the wire three weeks later. Incidentally we came on the first train to Grande Prairie.

The homestead was quite a distance from school. We spent the first winter looking after the Foy place and in the spring moved to the John John's farm. We spent eight years there and dad used the machinery to cultivate his land on the homestead.

There was so little ploughed land that every spring there was an outbreak of fires. The men would fight back the flames with wet gunny sacks and when they had it controlled at John's, would rush down to our homestead to protect the buildings. One year, there was a huge fire in the Yukon and for weeks the smoke blotted out the sun and fine white ash fell on us. You may recall that a similar fire occurred in 1950 in northern Alberta and that the smoke darkened the sky over New York city.

The grain was hauled to Grande Prairie by sleigh and horses. It was a 60 mile round trip and took two days. There were many anxious times during blizzards and cold weather until we would hear the sleigh bells and know dad had returned safely.

Mother was an excellent dressmaker. I don't know how she found the energy but after a busy day she would work at her sewing. It was quite usual for her to start after ten o'clock with only a coal oil lamp for light. She made several white satin wedding dresses. The two I remember were for Anna McNeil and May

Hothersoll, later Mrs. Fred Smith of Lake Saskatoon.

In later years, mother and dad sold the farm and lived in Beaverlodge. Dad died in 1965 and was predeceased by his son, George, in 1945. Mother now lives in Hythe. Their two daughters live in Beaverlodge. Edna is married to Hugh Moon and is the matron of the Beaverlodge Hospital. I married Ted Chambers who was killed by a run-away turn-a-pull south of Grande Prairie.

#### THE TOM WATT FAMILY

The Tom Watt family came to live in the S.E. corner of Appleton in 1930. Tom, born and brought up in Strathaven, Scotland, had come to Edmonton in 1908 and in 1912, Mary (Aitken) joined him and they were married in St. Faith's Anglican Church, North Edmonton. One son, Alex, and one daughter, Margaret were in the family. Tom was a building contractor and worked in Edmonton, Calgary and many of the towns in central Alberta. As a sub-contractor he helped build the massive government grain elevator in Edmonton.

Mary had a sister in Grande Prairie, Mrs. E. J. Lyne, and on a visit there in 1929 Tom bought the S $\frac{1}{2}$  14-71-10-W6 from P. J. Tooley, and the following summer Alec and helpers brushed and broke a good portion of the land. The Huber tractor used to do the work had quite a time keeping itself together. The excuse given was that "it developed so much power inside it broke on the outside". The rest of the family came up in 1930 and were delighted to find themselves a part of such a pleasant, neighborly community. Another half section, the "Foy" place, was added in 1932 and the work of brushing and breaking the new land was completed in 1933. Those were the days of a

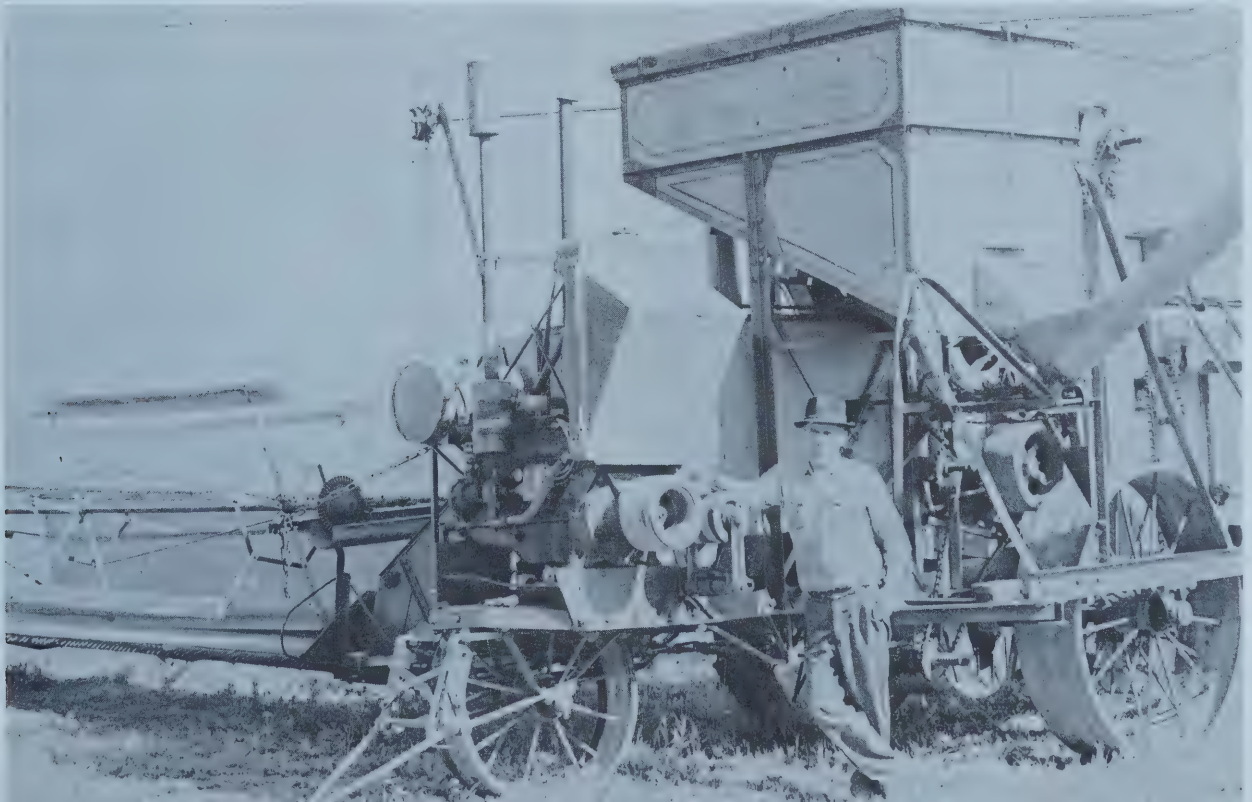
Tom Watt's, Nichols and Sheppard combine. One of the first three introduced into southern Alberta later purchased by Otto Holter. Shown with Ted McLean as it stands in the South Peace Centennial Museum.

"dollar a day and your board" for a long, long, hard day so land was brought into production very cheaply. Tom helped build the hospital in Beaverlodge and another at Fairview. In 1939 he joined a company out in Calgary surfacing runways for the Airforce Training Scheme and worked all over the southern part of Alberta. Mary and Margaret stayed on the farm to keep everything under control till Tom returned in 1945. Mary Watt died in 1951 and Tom in 1952. Both Tom and Mary Watt deemed it a privilege and a great pleasure to have part of their lives on the farm south of Beaverlodge. Tom knew farming in Scotland so realized how precious land could be and to live on a hill with a view of the Rocky Mountains isn't a gift everyone gets. They had, according to Tom, "the best water in Alberta." "The miracle of the modern car" was another delight and afforded them many good trips and holidays. Mary Watt was a good cook and enjoyed putting a good meal on the table, an interest much appreciated by Tom. She was a member of Willowlodge Chapter I.O.D.E. and a supporter of St. Luke's church and W.A.

During the 1930's Alec was very involved with the Monkman Pass Highway Association and the cutting of a trail through to the West. Later a company was formed and cabins and tourist facilities built at Kinuseo Falls on the Murray River. He served in the Tank Corps during the war. Alex is married to Frances Harris and they have their home at Surrey, B.C. There is one daughter, four sons and four grandchildren in the family. Margaret is married to Rowe Harris and they farm the original section. There are three daughters, and one son and four grandchildren in their family.

#### ALBERT AND OLIVER WERTZ

The Stark and Appel land has had several owners through the years. Albert and Oliver Wertz came in





1928 and lived on the Stark quarter. They used a natural grove of trees to make a lovely setting for a comfortable log house.

They were very active in the neighbourhood and their music and readings were a welcome addition to the community programs in the Appleton school.

Their sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brown and family Harriet and Elmer, lived with them for a while until they located on their own land in Hinton Trail.

After about 10 years Albert and Oliver moved to Feller's Heights where they are still living.

### THE WHEELER STORY

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wheeler and son Nelson came here from British Columbia. They had served in missionary work in South Africa for some years and it was there that Nelson was born. They took over the Kerkhecker place along the Beaverlodge river where they farmed for several years. Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler were both active workers in the Anglican church and Mrs. Wheeler helped with a girls group. Mr. Wheeler was an authority on flowers.

As years went by, Mrs. Wheeler suffered a long illness. Mrs. Sharp helped look after her for a while. Mr. Wheeler and Nelson added a comfortable living room to the house and had a nurse. Miss Ward came in from Edmonton to take charge until her death. A few years later Mr. Wheeler, too, passed away.

Nelson Wheeler and Norah Mortwedt were married and farmed the home place from 1946 to 1954. They had two sons, David and Richard. Eventually they moved to Chetwynd where Nelson was in the lumber industry until he retired. Norah is assistant post master there.

David started to school in Beaverlodge, then went on to graduate from University. Ricky works in the British Columbia Forestry Station at Williams Lake.

### MICHAEL WHITE — by W. D. Albright

The law among the early settlers west of Beaverlodge was administered by Michael Samuel White, a Justice of the Peace. It seems that what principally influenced him in his selection of his location was the fact that from the west end of it he could see the Rocky Mountains with their snow-clad peaks which reminded him of his native Switzerland. Perhaps few men had a more adventurous career than White. His early boyhood days were spent in various European countries, and while still a boy he was selling newspapers on the streets of New York. After a great deal of travel, he took up a homestead in Saskatchewan, in which province he was later appointed a Homestead Inspector.

He was a great personal friend of the late Rev. Dr. John McDougall of Calgary, the great pioneer, missionary, empire-builder and author. It is said that Dr. McDougall's last book "The White Buffalo" was inspired by Michael and that the original manuscript of this book was written by Michael from Dr. McDougall's dictation as they were travelling together. He was also closely associated with the late Hon. Frank Oliver.

After studying civil engineering in Indiana, Michael was appointed as Office Assistant to the Com-

missioner of Dominion Lands in Ottawa, but attracted to the Peace, he relinquished his position and walked over the Edson trail in the autumn of 1911. William Bernard freighted in about 400 pounds of books for him. Among these, there was the 30 volume Encyclopedia Britannica.

Although tall and sufficiently strong physically to fling a breaking plow about, whiffle trees and all, he was not an expert plowman, and so Bernard hitched his team ahead of Michael's three ponies, and they broke 60 acres to prove up two South African scrips. He cut his first crop of oats with a scythe and cradle. While this took a long time, the effort was worth the trouble, for the oats, when stacked alongside the house, not only provided fodder for his horses, but was a drawing card for the prairie chickens that came in droves and furnished an abundant supply for the larder during the winter months. After proving up, Michael served on the Edmonton Police force, leaving it to study telegraphy at Alberta College. Later he studied in the Dominion School of Railroading in Toronto and in the Dier's School of Telegraphy in Ottawa.

Inheriting the Swiss lingual aptitude, he was called upon during World War I to handle ten different languages. He also worked for the Dominion police, and for the postal authorities. There was hardly a department of the federal government that did not utilize his services as interpreter or translator during that time. For a time he was the Continental Representative in Europe of the Colonization Department of The Canadian National Railways. Upon his return, he attended the Columbia University, taking up journalism. He joined the Soldier Settlement Board of Canada, of which he was the Assistant Secretary until the Board was abolished by parliament. Because of his legal mind and the capacity for exact expression, he was often called upon to draft legislation and amendments thereto. Some of the work done by him in this connection is still on the statute books, a part of the law of the land.

Michael retained a most pleasant recollection of his three years stay on the homestead. Many a time after leaving he was tempted to return, and with this end in view had his land re-plowed, but the city-bred girl he married had a disinclination for farm life.

The neighbors will recall that the White section was purchased in the thirties by William Johnson of Fairview for his two sons. Those who knew that district referred to him as "Midnight Johnson" as his threshing crew was said to never be certain whether the day's run started at midnight or ended then. The farm was later sold to Miller and Cantlo Bagnell and is now part of the Rowe Harris farm.

### AUSTIN WILLIS

Austin Willis was born in Battleford in 1900. His father was of English descent. He was an early settler on the Portage Plains and had the first mower and rake in the district. He taught school and walked or rode horseback to the school. He ran a general store in Battleford, then moved to Saskatoon in 1904 where he taught school for several years. In 1913 he moved to Regina to become the assistant city treasurer.

Austin's mother was Irish, a sister of Dr. L. J. O'Brien.

Austin served in an artillery unit in France and Belgium in World War I. He and his brother Irvin operated the Dr. O'Brien farm in 1920-21. In 1921 Austin married Mary Ray and in 1922 they bought the Scotty Irvine place. Austin recalls that for a wedding present Mary's folks presented them with their best milk cow. He also recalls the time when Charlie Ingstrom needed a top rider for his horse in a race against a Frank Donald horse and frantically searched the Grande Prairie sports grounds for Mary. Charlie's horse won the race.

Austin might never admit that he is a good farmer but for many years he consistently had a field of oats yielding 100 bushels of oats per acre.

There are two children. Dora has been a professional model in Montreal and is married to Cy Pike of Edmonton. They have a son Gordon, a car salesman in Edmonton and two girls, Marlene, an airline stewardess married to Peter Beldfell of Winnipeg and Margo, an accountant in Edmonton.

Walter married Marjorie Romanko of Bluesky and they are prominent in the Elks and Royal Purple. Their daughter, Pamela is married to David Bressler, a computer operator for Proctor and Gamble, Grande Prairie. Dale, not married is a plumber. Allan married to Donna Jordan of Rio Grande and Gerald, married to Barbara Farris of Hythe are associated with Walter in a farming-cattle enterprise.

Austin and Mary have six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.



Austin, Marj, Allen, Walter and Mary Willis.



Bob Dewar, Walter Willis and Earl Lossing taking in the sights of Edmonton.



Dora Willis and Bud Eggenberger.





Albert Anderson with horses, Maud, Lady and Queen cutting grain at the Experimental Farm, 1919.



C. F. Lossing's field of Banner oats in stock, 1928.



# BEAVERLODGE NEW TOWN

## THE NEW TOWNSITE

The history of the new town of Beaverlodge has been one of clear vision, steadfast progress and few blunders. Behind this thriving town lies the abundance of a rich fertile farming area, the support of the Federal Research Station personnel and the pay cheques of the Radar Base established on Saskatoon Mountain. As proof of this read how the cooperation that has always been a basic characteristic of the Beaverlodge district went to work to procure a hospital, a curling rink, a community centre, a band, churches, schools, our centennial celebration — and about our darkest hour when fire wiped out a whole block of the town. But first of all the dramatic move of a whole town from one site to another, as reported in the *Grande Prairie Herald* — October 19, 1928.

"The new townsite of Beaverlodge, located about a mile west from the old town was the scene of great activity in late 1928. All kinds of buildings were in the process of erection, and preparations were being made for others. Innumerable trucks and teams were employed in hauling lumber and various kinds of building material. In a word, the old town of Beaverlodge was preparing to move.

"The site is on a gentle western slope on the west half of D. C. Cranston's scrip.

"Provision has been made in the planning for wide streets. Tenth Street, the main one, running at right angles to the railway from a point where the new depot will be built, is 100 feet wide. Second Avenue, parallel to the First or Railway Avenue is 80 feet.

"The new town is fortunate in having initially two good wells.

"The following who were conducting businesses at the old town, are making preparations to move to the new townsite: I. E. Gaudin Ltd., general store; J. A. Beaudet, general store and hotel; Allen & Davis, hardware; Anderson & Hume, garage; Hans Brudwold, blacksmith; Lossing & Cawston, agents for the International; E. A. Smith restaurant; Mrs. H. Halliday, restaurant; R. Watson, real estate and insurance; H. W. V. Clarke, real estate and insurance; E. A. Smith, butcher; Ryan Bros., livery; "Colonel" Hogg, auctioneer; the Bank of Commerce, under the management of J. L. Kerr. The telegraph office, post office and land office probably will be moved in the near future.

"J. H. Murphy is the telegraph operator. Walter Bond is postmaster, agent for the Department of Lands and Forests and telephone operator.

"There are two schools on the old townsite — one used for public school and the other for high school. There are two churches — United and Anglican — and the Christian Association Hall.

"In the new townsite, the Frontier Lumber Company has completed the erection of a new building, 60 x 90 feet. If to this there is added the sheds and yards, the business includes an area 210 feet by 120 feet.

"Leslie Emes has opened an up-to-date gent's furnishing business. Ford's grocery is also opened for business, as is the Windsor cafe. E. A. Smith's butcher shop is nearing completion.

"I. E. Gaudin is erecting a large block which will be used for a general store. This building, which will have a basement 30 x 52 feet, will have a frontage of 48 feet and run back 90 feet including warehouse.

"The following buildings are in the process of





Laying the track.



Rede Stone, age 78, one of 3 first permanent settlers, driving the spike as the steel entered Beaverlodge.



Building the railway grade.



N.A.R. Station, Beaverlodge. This building is now the Riverbend golf course club house.



Beaverlodge under construction. 1928.



Beaverlodge

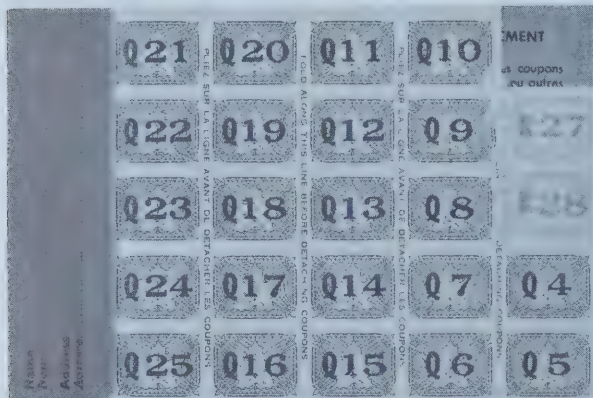


Beaverlodge 1929.





Beaverlodge, about 1955.



Photograph 1 sheet Wartime ration coupons.

building: Ryan Bros., livery barn, 40 x 60; Allen & Davis' hardware store; J. A. Beaudet's general store, two-storey, 30 x 80. Mr. W. Q. Adams has the lumber on the ground for his new hardware. Rex Ireland of Wembley also has material on the ground for the erection of a livery barn, 30 x 90 feet.

"There were 22 applications for the seven elevator sites allotted and contracts for the seven have been let, viz., the Pool, United Grain Growers, Alberta Pacific, Gillespie, and Security."

The move to the new townsite was exciting as there were developments almost daily. Walter Bond carefully scrutinized his list of telephone rentals. The number was increasing slowly but surely, and he had been promised that when the magic number was 100 the Alberta Government would institute 24-hour service.

The new town has had to face up to many problems, the first of which was whether or not to plan for an organized water and sewer system. Obviously a small community could not afford such an expenditure, but the decision was made to go ahead. Then came the problem of sidewalks, curbs and hard-surfaced streets, a curling rink, artificial ice, a major baseball layout, a library, a swimming pool, a tennis court and apartments for retired citizens. Each in turn was virtually impossible but each was constructed and all have been highly successful. True, government grants have been generous but the brunt of the expense is met by taxes. Fortunately the civic officials have always been able and imaginative and all this has been ac-



Girls' Class at work in Legion Hall, Youth Training School, Beaverlodge. January, 1938.

complished under a tax rate said to be the lowest in the Peace!

#### A. H. ABBOTT

As a young man in London, England, Bert Abbott was a clerk in an antique auction salesroom. It was his duty to spot the successful buyer, dash to him through the sedate audience, collect the charges and be back in time to spot the next sale. It was an exacting job, yet it was studded with adventure. His most vivid recollection was the sale of the bugle which sounded the "Charge of the Light Brigade" in the Crimean War. It sold for 50,000 pounds, many times that much in today's values.

In 1901 Bert, a brother and a friend came to Canada to farm. Obviously they were poorly equipped for the venture but they settled near Churchbridge. It must have seemed strange for the neighbors seeing them working in the fields in starched, white shirts. On one occasion they were dressing for a dance and to their dismay there was only one shirt clean — and it was missing. Later they found it at full mast flying from the chimney. On another occasion, someone bet Bert \$10.00 that he couldn't ride a certain horse. Bert tried and did his best!

Soon the farm went broke and Bert got a job in a general store. Then he met Anne Fraser, whose parents had come from the Orkney Islands at the time of the Riel Rebellion. When the railroad was extended to Sheko, Bert established a store there for the Great West Trading Co., a syndicate of American farmers of the district. In 1907 he moved on to Foam Lake for the Company and when it sold out, he opened a real estate office and became secretary of the Municipality.

In 1933 the Abbotts moved to Rycroft and a year later moved to Beaverlodge where Bert worked as bookkeeper at the Experimental Farm and Anne ran the boarding house. Anne was an exceptionally good cook and even yet John Foster and Jim Stoker tell of her homemade soup and baking powder biscuits! In 1939 the Abbotts retired to Beaverlodge where Bert did some bookkeeping, continued to work over his extensive stamp collection and did Income Tax counselling. Anne died in 1951 and Bert in 1966.

There were two girls, Mae and Violet. Mae took business training in Yorkton and worked for a lawyer in Foam Lake until she married Basil Hill, born at Portage la Prairie and in charge of the Saskatchewan



Wheat Pool elevator agent at Gerald. In 1932 Basil shifted to the National Elevator at Rycroft and was transferred to Beaverlodge in 1938. Basil died in 1959 and was noted for his cheerful attitude at all times, and for always being in the front line of a wedding party so that he could kiss the bride. He served as Commissioner of the baseball league and was a coach of the hockey team. Mae has served many organizations and for several years was the business manager of the hospital. Now she is content with being Beaverlodge's Income Tax expert!

Violet taught school and married Tom Martin, the agent of Victoria Elevator in Foam Lake. Later he was foreman at the Experimental Farm at Rosthern, served five years in World War II, was foreman at the Lethbridge Experimental Farm, farmed near Lethbridge. He retired to Victoria in 1961 because of ill health. Violet died there in 1966. One son, Delbert was an RCAF pilot, killed in a crash at Alert Bay. Colleen, a teacher married George Adams. Roger married Marnie Jones and is manager of a golf course in San Jose, California. Larry, the youngest married Judy Johnson and works for the B.C. Telephones.

#### COLEMAN ADAMS

Coleman B. Adams was born July 14, 1867 in Hanover, Ontario. At the age of five he had infantile paralysis and had to wear braces and crutches the rest of his life. He learned the trade of watch-making.

He married May Cliff of Hespler, Ontario and they had three children, Haidee (Mrs. D. C. Hume), George, living in Anchorage, Alaska and Margaret (Mrs. August Graf) living in the Hinton Trail district. Coleman seemed to have had itchy feet as he moved to many places during his lifetime such as Washington, North and South Dakota, Arkansas, Minnesota, Saskatchewan and then to Beaverlodge in 1929. He ran a jewelry store in Adams Bros. general store till his death in November 1947.

Mrs. Adams was an excellent home maker and did everything possible to make life easy for Coleman, on crutches most of his life. Her specific challenge was the most recent crossword puzzle. Coleman's challenge on the other hand was cribbage and local "professionals" as Rupert Perry and Bert Abbott frequently called in for a session.

#### WILLIAM ADAMS — by Abbie Adams

William Quincy Adams was born in Edinburg, N.D. in 1893 and was a veteran of the 1914-1918 war. He went overseas with the Strathcona Horse and shortly after arrival was transferred to the Royal Air Force. He was hospitalized for some time due to injuries received in a plane crash. Later he returned to Canada on sick leave and was home only a short time before the war ended.

He homesteaded in Saskatchewan near Melfort, then came to Rosssburn, Manitoba and opened a hardware store in 1924. He married Abbie, daughter of Peter Black of Rosssburn.

There was a large foreign element in the district. They did business by bartering which Bill didn't like. Soon Jewish merchants moved in, so the town became almost a little Jerusalem. Bill had become quite in-



Alan Elliott and Griff Adams.



The W. Q. Adams' cabin on the Red Willow, the forerunner of the Beaverlodge Boys' and Girls' Camp.

terested in the Peace River country mostly through reading about its potentials. Early in the summer of 1928, he left by Ford car to see for himself. Our son George and I stayed with his parents in Crystal City during his absence.

Upon arriving in Beaverlodge he soon bought a lot and hired carpenters to build a store where Macleods is now. "Old Town" merchants were in the process of moving or building to the present location. A station





George Vagt and Griff Adams in hunting season.

had been built and the track laid as far as Hythe. In November he returned to Manitoba, picked up George and me and soon had all our worldly goods loaded and we were on our way to Alberta.

Arriving in Beaverlodge we found to our dismay the carpenters who were to have finished our living quarters at the rear of the store had taken a respite. Ugh! What a mess! However they were soon back on the job and we were "camping" quite happily in our new home, awaiting our furniture.

There was great excitement when the first train arrived. It was celebrated by a banquet in the Legion Hall in the "Old" town. As it was very cold weather the draymen filled his dray with "we the people" and drove us by sleigh to the celebration on the hill.

People were very kind and friendly, also very cooperative. Everyone participated in all social events.

In the spring of 1929, Griff Adams, Bill's bachelor brother arrived to be a partner in the business. He had been living in Detroit where he owned and ran a gas station.

He was a war veteran, a very keen hunter and fond of many sports ball, curling, golf and fishing. Children all loved him. Many of them with a nickel to spend on candy would hang around until they were sure that Griff would wait on them, as he gave very generous portions. Griff didn't lack for company. There were bachelors galore! Stan Davis, George Vagt, Reg Little, Earl Norris, Wayne Stanley, Joe Barrett, Ken Dalgleish and Ray Johnston to name a few.

After a number of years, Griff left for Winnipeg, to live with and take care of his parents. He also managed a large farm which he owned near Snowflake. He died very suddenly from a brain hemorrhage.

We were very blessed in August, 1929 with the arrival of a daughter, Helen Maxine.

A group of us "picnicked" every Sunday, exploring all the beautiful spots available. Eventually William Gillard, with the help of George built a cabin on the Red Willow which was used extensively, not only by us but by the whole community. For several years it was used by the boys' and girls' camp, which later bought the property.

Social life consisted of parties, bridge, dinners, etc. A group of eight couples formed a bridge club and we did play a great deal of bridge. Dances were quite

frequent there was also curling and skating. One winter we used an ice boat when the snow fall was nil. Hockey and badminton games were very popular. Skating and curling rinks were built. The opening of the curling rink was celebrated by a bonspiel, one lady on each rink. Unfortunately for Griff, whose rink I was on, I couldn't get a rock past the first hog line during the whole game. The weather had turned warm and the ice very soft. Although terribly embarrassed, I had the honor of throwing the first rock in the new rink as we happened to be the first rink to play.

Our years of living in the "Alley" at the rear of the store came to an end. Bill had drawn plans for our dream home with an odd suggestion from me — and it was completed. We moved at the end of December, 1935.

A Chinese man by the name of Wong ran a restaurant next door. He was a very kind and thoughtful person. Maxine often brought a stray dog home, hoping to be able to keep it. During winter months she had brought the mangiest looking mongrel home. We were going to Manitoba on a holiday in the summer, so decided that the dog would have to find a new home. Mr. Wong took it. Shortly before we were expected home from holidays, Mr. Wong came over to see Griff, "Trouble-trouble". When asked what the trouble was he replied, "My gosh, last night my cat had ten kittens and Maxine's dog had six pups!"

In the fall of 1940, our second daughter, Gail was born.

1948. There's an old saying trouble never comes alone. Bill hadn't been well for some time. After collapsing on the street the doctor diagnosed the trouble as heart. I was sent to Edmonton, a cancer suspect. A few days later a fire started in a car at a garage and spread very rapidly. Almost a whole block was destroyed. I believe the loss was estimated at \$200,000 of which we bore the greatest part. Bill bought a quonset hut and was soon in business again, although under very uncomfortable conditions. These premises were only temporary as the whole block was rebuilt ready for occupancy by November 1948.

Beaverlodge had numerous projects for men; Masons, Elks, Legion as well as the Hospital Board, the Town Council. Bill was active in Council, a representative on the School Board and he worked hard to get the Community Centre started. It was war time and difficult to procure supplies but the building finally materialized. The town needed additional school rooms, three were made available in the basement of the Centre. Supplies were acquired and the building grew.

For years as a member of the Hospital Board, Bill battled hard and long with the Grande Prairie Board to obtain a hospital in Beaverlodge. Success finally came. In 1955 Bill broke his hip and was in hospital for several months. We decided to sell the store to George Adams, Greg Walker and Don McDonald. We planned to go south for the winter.

We spent Christmas with Maxine and the John Adams family in Vancouver. A few days later we received a phone call from Edmonton that my only brother, George Black, Supervisor of 4-H clubs in

Alberta and well known in the community was seriously ill. I flew to Edmonton the next morning. He died four days later.

On a Sunday evening in 1956 Bill phoned me from Vancouver that he was on his way to his brother John's. While he was going with the green light, a car which was travelling too fast couldn't stop and crashed into Bill's car. He was rushed to the hospital but only lived an hour.

Son George bought Percy Stephens' farm. He married Colleen Martin and they have five children; Cheryl, Bill, Kim, Delayne and Tommie.

Maxine married Fred Stark, former Bank of Commerce manager here. They have three children; Bill, Tamarat and Alan. Their home is in Calgary.

Gail married Ray Schweitzer of Ponoka. They are now living in Edmonton with two sons, Darren and Shawn.

Home to me is Beaverlodge.

#### COLIN ANGEL — by Jeanette Angel

A man "alone" in a room full of people;  
A man who viewed and carried the world;  
A man who "felt" and "hurt" without others knowing;  
A man who was whipped and crippled by the society we know;  
A man who lived and found his "heaven";  
A man who died too soon for its glory.

This man was Colin Angel. Facts say he was born in Durham County, England, the son of a German father and an English mother. He had several sisters of whom little is known. He attended a boarding school for his early education and then since university was for the elite, he set out at the age of 18 to seek his fortune in the new land — Canada.

Arriving in Alberta, he worked for several farmers before he was able to purchase a farm of his own, near Lacombe. During this time he met Almina Jeanette from New Sarepta. A warm relationship developed and in 1938 they were married.

Two years later a son, Michael was born. However World War II had broken out in 1939 and Colin was quick to enlist. After a brief training period in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Brandon he served with the 5th Canadian Armoured Division in Europe until peace was declared.

Five years later he returned — a different man. His son was now five years old and saw him as a stranger; his wife had "manned" the farm in his absence.

They remained in New Sarepta for a short period and then moved to a farm at Lacombe, where they farmed for a few years. Times were hard for all but for farmers in particular. Colin chose to move his family into Lacombe and have more security in work. For a period he worked as partsman at Adamson's Motors and later for Vellner Motors in Red Deer.

Another addition to the family arrived in November of 1947 — this time a daughter, Jeanette.

In 1956 Colin chose to join the staff of the Alberta Liquor Control Board. After consulting his family he decided to accept a transfer to Beaverlodge in 1960.

And so the world was opened before "his very eyes"! "Tell of his love for birds and animals and carvings; his love for the Wapiti river and the North

. . .", his wife tells me. God, how she knows! But how does one put it into words!

Colin had always been a handyman, but suddenly his abilities blossomed. He began carving from mere blocks of wood "authentic" replicas of birds and animals of all descriptions — yes, even of people. He began painting. He devoured nature by purchasing a cabin at the Wapiti river. Life was ecstasy! Words were too narrow to share his joy and happiness when he was there. He became involved in the community as never before; a member of the Lions, the Chamber of Commerce, the Legion, the Canadian Nature Federation and the Library Board. The recent Library grant is an answer to his labours and dreams.

The hands of death suddenly grasped him in the early hours of September 18, 1973.

But if he were here today I'm sure then his message would be: Despite all the unrest and unhappiness of the world, take a look around you and you WILL see heaven. Feel the soil in your hands; see the birds in the sky; see the animals in the brush; grasp the beauty of the sunset; assimilate the view of swaying birch, spruce, poplar, pine in the foreground of the Rockies; listen to the message of a creek or rushing river as you lie down by its side — LOVE NATURE — and happiness will be yours!

In a beautiful garden they let him lie  
Far from the "urban sprawl"  
Enshrined by the trees and flowers and birds  
The things he loved best of all.

He held the Banner high and wide  
Not owed he any man  
His effort was his foremost pride —  
Purposeful projects his plan.

His passing we must all regret,  
His family will mourn —  
But let's be glad we have him yet  
Within that garden-lawn

— Wilf Guest

#### THE ARCHER STORY

Joseph Archer was the son of a prominent physician in England. He came to Canada as a young man and was in the first class in law to graduate from the University of Alberta. In Edmonton he met Ruth Carlisle, a teacher from Peterborough, Ontario. They married in 1916 and Joe took his bride to Lake Saskatoon, where Ruth's brother, Dr. A. M. Carlisle set up his first practice. Here their two eldest children, Margaret and John were born. Two years later Joe opened a law office for two days a week in Beaverlodge.

During the winter of 1925, Lake Saskatoon moved en masse to Wembley — then the end of steel. The Archers moved too. In 1926 son Bill was born. The two eldest children received their education at the local school and piano lessons from Mrs. Barber Smith, mother of Jessamy Smith, at Lake Saskatoon.

At Lake Saskatoon, Fred Smith had met and married May Hothersoll, a concert pianist from England. Of this union were born Mavis Barber Smith and Fredrika Jessamy Hothersoll Smith — the future



bride of John Archer. The Fred Smiths moved to Edmonton and he became the supervisor of farms at the Dominion Government Residential Indian School. While Mavis and Jessamy were growing up they took piano lessons from their mother and violin lessons from A. B. Hedman of Grande Prairie, dressmaking at the Edmonton Technical School and teacher training.

The Archers had been making some changes too. They moved to Beaverlodge where Bill finished his high school. Margaret had taken a secretarial course and had gone to England to work. In 1937, John went to Hythe to apprentice in Elliot's Hardware Store.

After a year in Hythe, John became a supervisor at the Dominion Government Indian Residential School near Edmonton. There he fell in love with Jessamy Smith, went to University for a year and joined the R.C.A.F. qualifying as a pilot.

In 1942, John and Jessamy were married, making their first home at Claresholm where John was now a flying instructor. John Frederick was born there. As he learned to toddle about he embarrassed his folks by calling every man in uniform "Daddy."

After John's discharge in 1945, they moved north. John worked with the Adams Brothers until his own hardware store was built in 1947. In 1948, the Archers Senior retired and moved to Victoria. The other children were born in Beaverlodge — Bill, Joseph, Mavis, Robert, and David. By this time Archers had moved to Veteran's Row in Beaverlodge — at first without lights or water but with cows, chickens, pigs, and a big garden to keep little people busy. As if that wasn't enough there was also Cubs, Scouts, C.G.I.T., Junior Choir, Sunday School, music lessons and band work. Jessamy ran a tight schedule — from Joe's 6:30 a.m. piano practising until the evening chores and homework were done. The band was a family affair with five Archers in it at one time — including John and Jessamy. John recalls the time he stumbled in a hole during a parade, rolled around the drum and came up without missing a beat.

In 1960 Ruth Archer died in Victoria. The next year Joe Archer took his 15-year grandson Bill to England for a visit. While he was there, Joe Archer died suddenly.

John's business has prospered. During the years he has been president of the Canadian Legion and superintendent and teacher of the United Church Sunday School. He was Mayor of the Town for seven years. He sat on the local school board and has been the Beaverlodge representative on the County School Committee. As mayor of the town he points with pride to the Centennial Swimming Pool built in 1967. Not so proud was he of the "big splash" he made from the high diving board on opening day. Mavis instructed at the pool from 1967-1972.

In 1961, John added a Self-serve Groceteria to his hardware and son Fred assisted the manager after school and on week-ends. Fred now owns it outright. He married Sharon Schwemler of LaGlace and they have one daughter, Lee Ann.

Bill lives in Toronto and is a racing car enthusiast and is "married" to his Barracuda.

Joe is a graduate in political science from Ottawa

University, Kansas. He is at present in Fort Smith supervising Indian and Eskimo children.

Mavis has her degree in physical education and the National Life Saving certificate for life-guards. She married Rod Edey in 1971 and is supervisor at Contederation Pool, Edmonton.

Robert married Laurie Styles in 1972 and has gone into partnership with John in the hardware store.

David, the youngest enrolled in the Bachelor of Music degree program and intends to take his education degree so that he can teach in the schools or move into concert work.

John's sister Margaret married Hugh Ellis. They lived in England during the war years, came back to Grande Prairie in 1954 — then moved to Edmonton where Hugh taught classes. They had three children. John, Barbara and Gillian. Margaret was killed in a car accident in 1966. The three children are married. Hugh lives in Edmonton.

Bill, John's brother, attended St. Stephens Theological College in Edmonton to become an ordained United Church minister. He is now Major Archer, married to Ruth Reed. They have three children. He is chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces at Ottawa.

Jessamy says her biggest and most satisfactory accomplishment has been raising her family. She herself is an accomplished seamstress and teacher of piano and clarinet. She has directed the United Church choir for over 20 years and has been active in all church and musical affairs in the town. The family relax with fishing and boating.

#### **BANKING — by Doug McFarlane**

The first bank in the South Peace was opened in Lake Saskatoon in 1911 by the Bank of Commerce. George Martin was posted there in 1915. Branches were established in Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge in 1920, the latter under Allan V. McLean. The original building at Beaverlodge was constructed by W. G. Johnson and consisted of little more than space for a staff of three and a room in the rear for living quarters for the staff.

In 1924-25, Ralph Daw and Doug McFarlane lived and worked there. Manager Nelson lived across the road in Smith's hotel. Doug remembers the long summer days when business was slack and the manager could usually be found pitching horseshoes with I. E. Gaudin on a vacant lot between the store and bank. A pad of note forms in his hip pocket easily handled any loan business for the day. For relaxation Ralph and Doug roamed the country on horseback. Winter was the season for sleigh riding on the hill, dances, plays and a minstrel show and for bridge. Soldier Settlement Board representative, Fred Lever, late of Leverholme, England made the fourth. On cold stormy days the game started early in the day and ran until the wee hours of the morning. In such weather the safe was never opened and meals were brought in from Smith's hotel. The building had no insulation. Frost rimmed the blankets and the water pail froze solid. Ralph tried to beat the system one night by letting the fire out early and building it ready to light in the morning. It burnt out in the night and morning

found everything frozen as usual and with no kindling available.

The first radio in the South Peace, if not the entire Peace, was purchased by Ralph Daw that winter, a three-tube Atwater Kent complete with large horn speaker, A, B and C batteries. The cost was \$300, quite an item considering the salary scale started at \$800 per year. With a warm Chinook that radio really worked. Stations KPO the city by the Golden gate, WWL New Orleans, WW Grant the Voice of Prairies, CFCN Calgary and many other distant stations were available to us. With very few on the air and no electrical interference the reception was amazing. Servicing became a problem however, as it took a month to get new batteries and tubes from the factory. There was never a dull moment in old Beaverlodge and at that time the bank actually paid a northern allowance of \$200 per annum extra to work here.

In the summer of 1925, Beaverlodge, Lake Saskatoon and Grande Prairie branches of the Canadian Bank of Commerce were closed and the business consolidated at Wembley, the new end of steel. There were many hilarious times in the short life of that Wembley branch, but that is another story.

In 1928 with extension of rails through Beaverlodge the old bank building was moved to the new townsite and reopened. By 1931 the future of the new village seemed assured and a new building was opened on corner 10th St. and 2nd Ave. The original building since has served as the Legion and Elks hall, a restaurant with Mrs. Fern Carson, the Helzel shoe store and finally the Helzel dwelling. Two well known and very popular managers of this period were John Kerr and Stuart H. (Sandy) Andrews. The first plumbing in town was installed in this new branch. It was said that the system worked as perpetual motion, a shallow spring under the building supplied the water and the waste from a septic tank disappeared into the same source. Drinking water was bought by the pail.

By 1966 Beaverlodge again warranted the expansion of banking facilities and a new building was opened on the same site. The old building was moved to a farm in Goodfare district.

A couple of years later the new masonry Provincial Treasury Branch was opened on main street. Beaverlodge was now firmly established as a banking centre.



Three homes of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Beaverlodge. L. Building erected 1966, building erected 1931 and R the building erected in 1920 in the Old Town and moved to the new townsite.

## THE EDWARD BATTER STORY

Edward Anton Batter was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta, son of Anton and Gertrude Batter, both of whom had been born in Lithuania. When his father came to Canada he obtained work with the C.P.R. and stayed with them until his retirement. During this time he worked as a construction contractor on the dams at Bassano and Brooks. Edward was the fourth son of 11 children.

Edward married Linnea Lidvell of Tompkins, Saskatchewan. Linnea's parents were Swedish and Norwegian. They married at Gull Lake and homesteaded near the Cypress Hills. After their marriage Ed and Linnea Batter lived in Piapot, where Ed was agent for the Western Grain Co. until moving to Pincher Creek, Alberta. There he worked in a seed cleaning plant. In September 1953 they moved to Beaverlodge where he was an elevator agent for seven years until ill health forced him to leave that business. Then he took a job as a Forestry look-out man at the Smoky Tower until his death in 1969.

They had three children, Merrilee Mae (Mrs. Esdale Gaudin), Joseph Edward, who after having taken two years of drafting at Calgary Tech. is working in Vancouver and Brian Trevor who after two years in radio and television at Calgary Tech. is working as a news broadcaster on CJOL — Westaskiwin.

After her husband's death Linnea left the Research Station at Beaverlodge where she had been employed as cook and manager of the boarding house. She went to Calgary where she took a C.N.A. nursing course and has returned to the Peace where she is employed at the Municipal Hospital in Grande Prairie on the Maternity Ward.

## THE ALF BAYERS

That Alf Bayer was born of immigrant parents in a sod shack on a Saskatchewan homestead reads like the prerequisites of success, but one must add that it takes a lot of hard work and a good measure of luck.

The old country schoolhouse gave Alf the basics for high school in Medicine Hat and he continued on to graduate from the University of Alberta with a B.Sc. in Agriculture. Armed with these credentials he found employment, first with the Eastern Irrigation District at Brooks, Alberta, then with the Dominion Department of Agriculture as a seed inspector. It was during this early work that Alf first became involved in the raising of fescue seed, a crop he was to become more and more involved with. In a multiplication program run by the EID Alf had taken some of the first fescue imported to Canada and carefully nurtured it on a two-acre plot. It was harvested with a mower and placed in a header box to be threshed by hand. Unfortunately some other employees at the EID mistook the unthreshed fescue for hay and fed it to the horses. It was a priceless loss.

During his first eight years as a seed inspector, Alf had the opportunity to visit all parts of Alberta and British Columbia and it was on a trip to the Peace River country that he met his future wife, Isobel Kennedy.

Isobel was also from a pioneer family and took her early schooling at Wembley, then later graduated





Alfred and Isabel Bayer.

from the Vermilion School of Agriculture. Her early employment was with the Dominion Provincial Youth Training Program.

In 1946 the Bayer family took up residence in Beaverlodge. Alf accepted a position with the McDonald Grain Co. and with his knowledge of farming and forage seeds it proved to be a good move. By this time the production of creeping red fescue seed reached a volume of interesting proportions. At one time the Beaverlodge district boasted 90 per cent of the world production and few concerns handling grass seed could cope with the storage of this bulky seed. Open air storage in jute bags became a necessity and Alf as a young man took the risk of storing over a million dollars worth of seed with the ground as a floor and the sky as a ceiling. This later came to be the standard storage method. However, in recent years a more sophisticated bulk handling system was adopted.

Again it was the production of fescue seed that urged Alf and Isobel to purchase a farm in the Valhalla district, the farm of Ivo Borgeson and a fabulous yield of grass seed gave impetus to the growth of this crop in the area. The Valhalla district proved to be a great source of seed in the following years. Alf's stock answer to doubting growers was to grow fescue until they lost money on it, which has never happened. The Bayer's farming operations expanded to include land near Beaverlodge. Here again it was fescue which served as the lure. The Bert Little farm also produced its share of grass seed.

Coming to Beaverlodge in 1946 and staying for 20 years speaks well for this delightful district. The Bayers found expression in church and community work. Isobel was especially active in arts and crafts. Their children, John and Barbara attended high school in Beaverlodge. Barbara graduated from the University of Alberta and is a practicing pharmacist in Calgary. At a very young age John, due to frequent visits to Wong's Cafe, aspired to be a restaurant owner with his father as the "Chinaman". Despite his early ideas he graduated in Commerce from the University of Alberta and continued on to qualify as a chartered accountant.

Presently the Bayers live in Edmonton but summertime finds them growing fescue on the Craig farm at Wembley. This is where Isobel grew up and it is not far from Beaverlodge where so many fond memories were created.



John and Barby Bayer at Halloween.

#### MISS ANNE BEATH

Anne Beath was born in Simcoe County, Ontario and came to Alberta in 1918. In 1929 she entered the Royal Alexander hospital in Edmonton to train as a nurse and remained on staff there until 1936. She was night supervisor in the Grande Prairie hospital for a while then moved to Peace River as matron of the hospital there. In 1940 she married Corporal Len Duffield, R. C. M. P. and they moved to Beaverlodge, where Anne took charge of the hospital. She died in 1948.

Anne Beath was a very capable person in all respects. She ran her hospital well, served the community diligently and made a vast number of very close friends.

#### THE BEAVERLODGE BAND — by Doug McFarlane

The Beaverlodge Community Band had its beginning in 1929, a dream of Mayor Hilliard Lyle and an old bandsman-telegrapher, John Murphy. The sum of \$800 was raised by the Council and the Board of Trade to purchase the basic instruments and music. Unfortunately Col. Lyle died in the fall of 1931, Conductor John Murphy in 1933 and his successor, druggist Ray Johnston in 1935. Cephas Tennyson tried to carry on but by 1936 practise had ceased and the instruments were scattered.

Fortunately for the Band, Doug McFarlane had played with it during periods of relief of the staff of the





Junior majorettes.



The Beaverlodge Band, John Murphy, Conductor, 1930.



The Beaverlodge Band playing at the Wilde and Lawless Stampede, Taylor, 1946. Clockwise from Snare Drum: Jack Finlan, John Holmberg, Walter Willis, Don Carrell, Helge Holmberg, Milo Grubb, Pat Carrell, Ralph Carrell, Bandmaster Doug McFarlane.



The Beaverlodge Band. "You name them."

Canadian Bank of Commerce as well as playing sax with Ray Johnston's dance orchestra. In 1937 Doug returned to Beaverlodge but found only two of the original members, Walter Willis and Jim Castleman willing to carry on. However, nine recruits, Ralph, Pat and Don Carrell, Jim Andrews, Carlyle and George Bond, Dunc Irvine, Bob Heller and an experienced drummer Walter Irby, were added.

Thus Beaverlodge's Annual May 24 Sports Day in 1938 again featured the Beaverlodge Band. During war the Band supplied players as needed to the Army Training Camp in Grande Prairie, with bandmaster McFarlane playing lead trumpet. A telephone call in 1946 resulted in three successive annual engagements at the Tommy Wilde and Jack Lawless Stampede at Taylor Flats. Over the years the Band has played in every major Peace River centre, even as far north as High Level and with many return engagements. The Old-Timers' Annual Picnic has never been missed in over 40 years and the Band has been a feature attraction at the opening of all major bridges in the Peace and many other public affairs. In 1955 it was chosen to represent the Peace in the Edmonton Jubilee Fair Parade. For several years the popular Majorette Troupe, trained by Norm McClellan added glamor to the parade.

Uniforms have always been part of the show. First there were braided caps. Then white pants were added. Next came discarded uniforms of the Edmonton Boys' Band, invoiced at \$1.00 each. These were, in turn replaced with uniforms from the Penticton City Band, Air Force blue, at \$20. Currently the uniforms are smart red blazers with white pants.

By 1960 the winds of change were blowing. Jim McNab and Bob Connell attended the first Provincial Band Workshop, held in Olds. Doug McFarlane and several others have followed since. The membership of the Band was built up to over 40 and family participation became the rule. With fuller instrumentation the organization became a community concert band and as such has won awards many times at festivals in Grande Prairie and the B.C. Block. It is estimated that there are 300 Alumni of the Band.

Bandmaster Doug McFarlane's enthusiasm was unceasing. Each newcomer to town was covertly assessed and fitted for a horn before the curtains were hung. In addition Doug participated in provincial band organizations and kept the home band in touch with the newest ideas. Since his retirement in 1964 the band has had several conductors who in their turn contributed to the musical development of the organization. Jim McNab stepped into the breach and held the band together. Cecil "Hip" Pocket elicited the confidence and ability which resulted in the winning of the Dawson Creek musical festival and a successful appearance in the Edmonton Exhibition Parade in 1964. Art Newman thanked the band members later for being guinea pigs in his first experiment in conducting and from this experience he has gone on to a career as a bandmaster in the Edmonton school system. Grahame Allen, Mary Carder and Frank Hoffman each brought unique talent and dedicated leadership over the next few years, ably assisted by Bill Connell and Edna Sparkes. John Hancock, the first band-





The Beaverlodge Band and majorettes at 1955 Jubilee Fair parade, Jasper Avenue, Edmonton.



The Beaverlodge Band in concert, 1971.



An ethnic group meeting for the May 24th parade.

master to be employed in the County of Grande Prairie school system, began raising a professional baton in 1971. The members of the Beaverlodge Band felt very fortunate indeed when John agreed to be their conductor. He is a fine musician.

Over the years the dream of Col. Lyle and John Murphy has matured. The Band functions as a musical club affiliated with an educational system but has always been self-supporting financially. Col. Lyle's project has made Beaverlodge known Province-wide.

When old members congregate the stories start:

Remember camping under those stooks at Waterhole in the rain?

Remember the tents at Charlie Lake, Taylor Flats, Winagami Beach? That long drag up the Mackenzie Highway?

Those Peace River Stampedes where the band paraded by day and members made up the dance orchestra by night? Those long up hill parades over coarse gravel in Fort St. John and Peace River? There you learned to balance on your toes and never miss a note.

The retired professionals we found on the homesteads, as Chuck and Milo Grubb, those old circus players who could play anything on trumpet or baritone?

Remember the Holmbergs from Spirit River and the priceless show that Jack Finlan would put on for the Indians at the stampedes, tossing the drum sticks faster than the eye could follow and Slim Millward, and Archie McKinnon on the trombone!

And you won't forget the chariot race at Grande

Prairie Fair where a team ran over the band stand, with bandsmen falling off every side. No one was hurt, only one clarinet damaged.

In reminiscent mood we recall that Ted Hodgson came from a long line of horn players and at times would admit that he could play as well as his brother Fred, a well known member of the R.C.A.F. Band. He won praise. He was demanding and things had to be right. At practice one night he stopped the music and with a heavy brow made a speech.

"If we are going to go places, we have to play our best and pay attention to business. If we are not ready to do this we might as well quit and go home."

Silence; then the practice session resumed.

At the end of the next number Hodgson made another speech, apologetic:

"You have just played the selection I thought we were to play the last time."

It was Beaverlodge's greatest tribute to its band to have it out-draw the R.C.A.F. Band in concert in the Community Centre.

There is something about a Home Town Band.

#### BEAVERLODGE CHAPTER I.O.D.E.

In the spring of 1947 a group of young women in the town of Beaverlodge decided that they would form a chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, which would meet in the evening, making baby-sitting less of a problem.

The Beaverlodge Chapter received its charter at ceremonies held at the home of Mrs. Lloyd Jewitt on September 8, 1947. The charter members were: Miss Louise Miller, who became the first Regent, Mrs.



Harold Jarvis, Mrs. Art Dixon, Mrs. Frank Darby, Miss Eleanor Jarvis, Mrs. Sam Martin, Mrs. Lionel Dobson, Mrs. George O'Brien, Mrs. Alf Bayer and Mrs. Archie Shields.

For many years it served this community faithfully, taking as its main project the operation of the Beaverlodge library. It also furnished a room in the new hospital, provided baby clothes and receiving blankets for the baby ward and gave books and pins to honor students in the town schools as well as carrying on other I.O.D.E. work at the provincial and national levels.

As the years went by the library was taken over by the Town, the hospital did not need so much help and many of the members moved away. Although over 80 women had belonged during this time there were too few left to carry on as a group. The chapter was disbanded in 1968, turning over its funds to the Willow Lodge Chapter. Most of the remaining members joined the Willow Lodge group and are still working faithfully for the I.O.D.E.

### BETTER FARMING

The Beaverlodge and nearby districts are proud of the farming practices of their better farmers. There have been several incentives. One was an extensive market in the 30's for high quality seed oats. Most of the farmers had land free of wild oats. The District Agriculturist and the Experimental Farm had campaigned in favor of growing pedigreed seed and the Alberta Government sent in portable seed cleaning machinery. Thus for several years Beaverlodge shipped out many cars of pedigreed, cleaned seed at premium prices.

Following this impetus came the expansion into grass seed production, so that in one year a survey intended to draw attention to soil-building crops reported that in Alberta 8 percent of the land was seeded down but in the Beaverlodge — Halcourt district the amount was 37 percent. This was just prior to the introduction of creeping red fescue as a seed crop.

Another factor, a major one psychologically, was the winnings of Herman Trelle, Robert Cochrane, Percy Clubine, the Rigby Brothers, Gordon Moyer, and others at the Toronto Agricultural Winter Fair and the Chicago International Hay and Grain Show. This showed that choice seed could be grown if better farming practices were followed.

At various times Better Farming competitions have been held. The winners include: Albert and Vern Hill, Verne Johnson, Lawrence Lock, Clarence Nelson, Rupert and Judd Perry, Gordon Moyer, Ken Edgerton and Alex Pandachuck.

Local growers who won top honours at major seed fairs include:

Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Toronto

1936 Don McNab, brome grass, first

1951 Gordon Moyer, oats, second

1953 Gordon Moyer, small seeds (alsike) Championship

1971 Don Sherk, timothy, first

Chicago International Hay and Grain Show

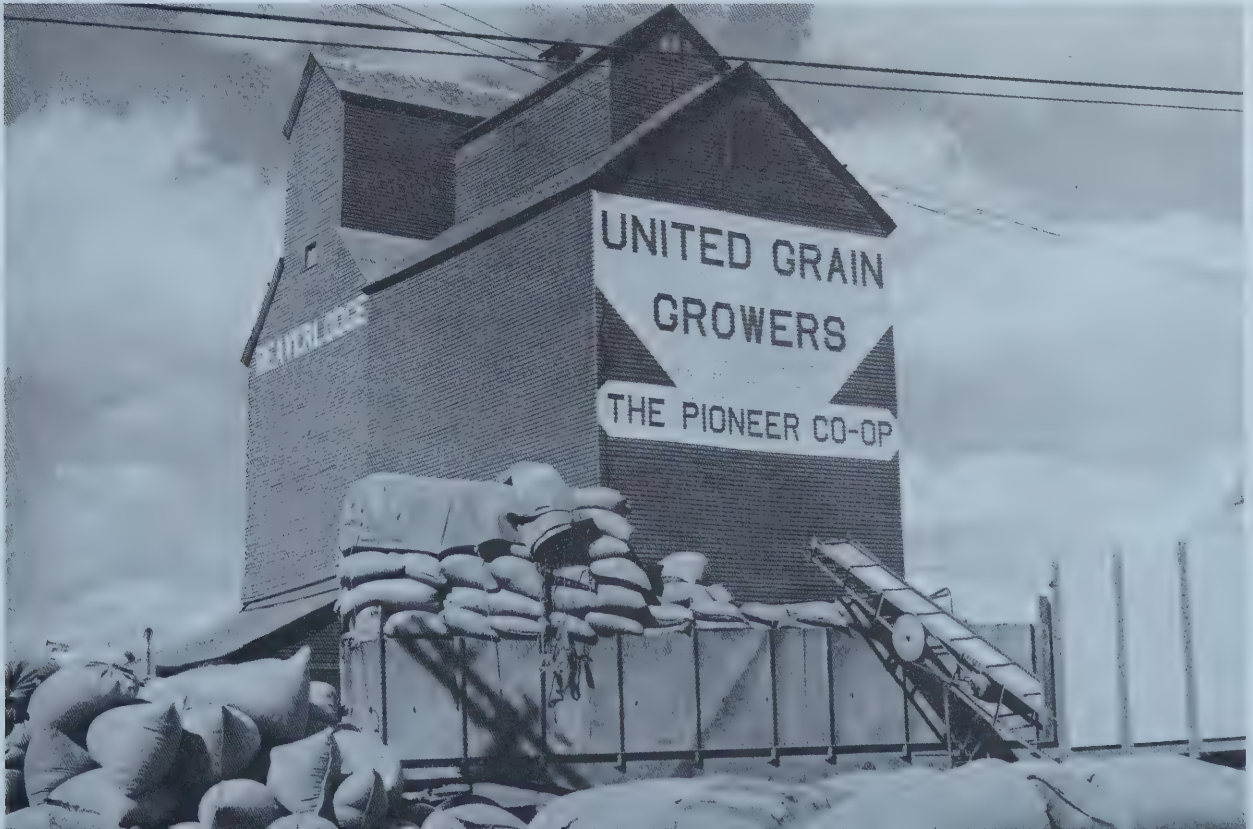
1951 Gordon Moyer, oats, Championship

1953 Gordon Moyer, small seeds (alsike) first

1933 Worlds Seed Fair, Regina

Edward Harrop, brome, first

The UGG Elevator, Beaverlodge, with sacked fescue.





Our farmer friends know that the Canadian Seed Growers Association, a farmer-run organization has jurisdiction over pedigree seed standards. Local names are included in records.

Honorary Life Member

E. C. Stacey

Associate Members

S. G. Bonin, C. R. Elliott, D. G. Faris, P. Pankiw  
Standing Committees, 1973-74

L. P. S. Spangelo

Robertson Associates, the highest honor given to a member: Alfred Burgess, Arnold Burgess, L.N. and N. A. Harris, Donald and J. A. McNab, Gordon Moyer, Gordon and Marley Sherk, Victor Thiel, Walter Willis

Long-Standing Members, growers of pedigreed seed  
L. A. Lock (38 years), W. Willis (36), Arnold Burgess (33), Donald and J. A. McNab (32), R.W. Harris (31), Eli Pandachuk (30), Gordon and Marley Sherk (25), L. J. Kerr (24), Ken Lock (21), C. F. Toews (21), Walter Lewkowicz (20), W. Dyrkach (19), Henry Ries (19), Don Sherk (18), Norman Foster (17), Victor Thiel (16), H. Ehrensperger (15), Olaf Hommy (15), Verne Johnson (15), Albert Miller (15), Oscar Gudlaugson (13), J. R. Harcourt (13), Melvin and Dalton Longson (13), William Jones (12), Vernon Hill (11), Robert Dewar (10).

Seed growing is an interesting business. It can be profitable, such as the purchase of a shiny Oldsmobile 88; the new owner was proud of it.

"But it is a lot of money. Can you really afford it?" A neighbour asked.

"Ah shucks, it is only 35 sacks of fescue seed!"  
The yield was good that year, and the price excellent.

## BLACK FRIDAY

Beaverlodge will long remember its darkest day,



After the big fire.

"Black Friday" as reported in the Herald-Tribune:

"To Beaverlodge, its main business block still smouldering, Friday, June 4, 1948 is still remembered as Black Friday.

"Ten business establishments were completely destroyed and four others seriously damaged when fire swept through the main business block of the town last Friday afternoon. The loss was estimated at more than one quarter of a million dollars.

"Buildings totally destroyed were Morse Bros. Machine Shop, Hume Garage, Davis Implement Shed & Showroom, Northwest Motors, the Carson Cafe, Olson's Shoe Store, McFarlane Agencies, offices of Town Clerk, Adams Bros. General Store, Pfau's Variety Store and Nasedkin Bros. Meat Market.

"The blaze was believed to have started by a short

The big fire. Beaverlodge, 1948.







circuit in a car in the machine shop operated by Arland Morse and Harry Meraw. The local fire truck was on the scene almost as soon as the fire siren sounded but the blaze had caught in the walls of the buildings and within a few minutes flames had burst through the roof. A high west wind carried flames to Hume's Garage, owned and operated by D. C. Hume.

"Private dwellings of E. Sanderson, George Wilson, R. E. Morse, and C. E. Cavett directly behind the blazing shops, were in grave danger and were evacuated.

"General alarms were sent to neighboring towns and fire trucks from Dawson Creek, Sexsmith, and the R.C.A.F. Station at Grande Prairie responded. Imperial Oil drillers also rushed trucks into town and it is largely due to the efforts of these men that the fire was checked.

"From Hume's garage the fire spread to Stan Davis' warehouse on to Northwest Motors operated by W. Wasmuth and Martin Bros. on the corner across from the hotel. From there it spread through the building which held the cafe, shoe store and town offices, then on to Adams' store, Pfau's Variety Store and the meat market. Adams' store was considered the greatest loss — stock and building being valued at approximately \$60,000. The family of H. Byers who lived above the meat market lost clothing, bedding and household furnishings.

"Serious damage was done to the Beaverlodge Hotel operated by Louis Donald and Dave Kousak. Fire broke out in the Windsor Cafe owned by Dan Wong, also at the Imperial Oil office and oil shed of which W. V. Harcourt is agent. Plate glass windows were broken in Gaudin's store and fronts of all buildings were badly scorched. Sparks and falling embers started many roof fires all over town. Bucket brigades worked frantically on the roof of the Ford Garage owned by Jack Cox and that of Gaudin's store.

"Electric service was discontinued from Grande Prairie at the outbreak of the fire. Poles and transformers were burned to the ground within the block. Volunteer fighters from all surrounding districts aided with trucks and cars in hauling water from Ralph Carrell's pond."

## EDITH AND WALTER BOND

Walter Bond, born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1898, came to Canada in 1911 to live with friends in Saskatchewan. War broke out in Europe and he found himself enlisted and journeying back to France in 1915 to serve as a military policeman in the Canadian Army of Occupation. At one time he was Middle Weight Champion of the Army. After the war, he came back to Canada and soon found the lure of the Peace River country challenging his adventurous nature. Walter married a Saskatchewan girl, Edith Bolingbroke, and then headed for a Peace homestead three miles north of the old town of Beaverlodge.

Business opportunities soon presented themselves and Walter took on the role of the first Dominion Land Sub-agent at Beaverlodge in 1925 and soon afterwards became an agent for farm machinery. In 1926 he relinquished these two jobs to become the postmaster of the community, and in 1928 he added the telephone exchange in the same building. These two jobs he kept through the years and his family of three boys and three girls, as they became old enough, took their turns behind the telephone switchboard saying "Number please", and sorting mail. In 1949 Walter was promoted to Postmaster at Grande Prairie. It was a matter of serious concern whether he could take the position knowing that it would remove him from the Beaverlodge community.

Walter Bond always enjoyed a challenge and when he was settled into business he turned his attentions to the Community to make it a better place. Many organizations benefited from his organizational ability.

He served as the mayor of Beaverlodge, president of the Canadian Legion, a member of the Hospital Board and one of the organizers of the Beaverlodge Community Centre. During World War II he regretted not being able to enlist but did his share by heading the War Bond drives. He was always ably assisted by dedicated workers. After one particularly successful drive, he decided to treat his salesmen to a dinner in Grande Prairie. The workers were happy their weeks of hard work were being recognized and ate heartily thinking that it was being paid for by campaign headquarters. Walter noted their appetites but never let on that his meagre commission would be strained to pay



Mrs. Walter Bond and sons Carlisle and George.



for the supper. He had a good sense of humour. On another occasion he organized a radio quiz program over Radio Station CFCP in aid of the War Bond drive. One of his team, Crosby McNaught, was asked if he thought he could hold his own against the Grande Prairie team and he replied, "I can if the questions pertain to the Bible, the dictionary or Eaton's catalogue." Walter's humbling question was to name Walt Disney's Seven Dwarfs and he bogged down on the fifth. For days to come this was a topic of conversation in the Bond home and thus the children aided their father's education! Yes, Walter did need a good sense of humour.

In later years Walter was recognized by the community as "Citizen of the Peace".

Edith Bond was a small, quiet individual, but nonetheless a very important person in the Community. She helped her husband behind the scenes in the Post Office, and at home was busy making most of the family's clothes and raising a great deal of their food on a small acreage. When the War Bond drives were on, she took on the full responsibilities at the Post Office so Walter could canvas.

Edith and Walter complemented each other's activities and so became a good working team and concerned parents. In 1959 they moved to Victoria to retire. Edith passed away in 1964 and Walter two years later.

Of their six children, their second son, George, was killed in Burma during World War II while serving with the Air Force. Their other children are living throughout Canada — Carlisle in Toronto, Hazel in Lethbridge, Myrtle in Edmonton, Gordon in Whitehorse, and Mildred in Grande Prairie.

For a time, Edith's brother, Roy Bolingbroke, lived in the community.

#### **ARTHUR BOWTELL**

Art Bowtell boasts that he could always see the lighter side of life, usually at his own expense and never at anyone's grief.

Art was born in Grey County, Ontario in 1887. His father, a farmer, came over from England in 1870. His mother was Scottish. The family moved to the Lacombe district in 1892 so that the father and two sons could homestead. One of Art's brothers was a land guide out of Lloydminster a year before the Barr Colonists arrived. Later he opened a real estate office in Vermilion in connection with his land guiding and for a time Art worked with him. In 1904 Art became a railroad mail clerk, running out of Winnipeg. He recalls that between times he learned to play pool, an art which later set him in good stead during his early days in Beaverlodge.

For 54 years Art was with the Federal Government Telegraph, under appointment by Frank Oliver. His first post was at Onion Lake, on an Indian Reserve, in 1907. He served at Lloydminster until 1912, then Fort Qu'Appelle, Battleford, Saddle Lake and Moose (east of St. Paul de Metis). He was at Fort Vermilion in 1931 and moved to Beaverlodge in 1936, upon the death of John Murphy.

Living at Beaverlodge has been simple, the way Art tells it. His salary when he arrived was \$480 per annum

but ultimately it was increased to \$780. Part of his duties was to answer a telephone call from Miss Violet Hayward of the Experimental Farm. The call came at 4:00 A.M. after Violet had stepped out into the cold to read the thermometers. Art in turn, transmitted the message by telegraph to Toronto so that the world and those fighting World War II would know what kind of weather was brewing at Beaverlodge. Art's other task was to serve as Mayor of the Village of Beaverlodge for four years, and to double as Public Works Officer.

Art married Lily Roscoe of Kinistino, Saskatchewan, of English descent. There were two daughters. Muriel married Elmer Carter and they lived at Mission, B.C. until Elmer died in 1971. Teresa married Al Davis of Vancouver and died about 1968. Lily died in 1937 and in 1946 Art married Hilda Anderson. Art may not move too freely now but he still calls Beaverlodge home and can still see the lighter side of life.

#### **ROBERT BUTLER**

Bob Butler was born in England, the son of an Irish Major Butler, who saw service in the Boer War. The family moved to Canada when Bob was quite young and set up an implement business in Cochrane, Alberta.

In 1929, Bob came to Beaverlodge where he opened a small confectionery store. Later he turned to implements and furniture. He died in 1952.

#### **PETER CAMPBELL**

Amongst Beaverlodge's staunchest citizens are the Peter Campbells. Peter was born in Spirit River in 1903. His father, Alex C. Campbell was born in eastern Canada and came west with the Klondikers. At other times he was employed on H.B.C. scows. Alex homesteaded near Jack Pine lake, three miles east of Grande Prairie and purchased Benson's Point, a scrip on Bear Lake. He died at age 95 and is buried in the Rio Grande cemetery. Peter's mother was a Gautier of Lac Ste. Anne, a Metis. They were married at Lac Ste. Anne.

Peter attended the first school in Grande Prairie. His teacher was I. V. Macklin and classmates included Jack Patterson and Bill Salmon. At the time Grande Prairie had one hotel and one livery stable, the old Dunlop barn. Also, he recalls Adam Calliou of Flying Shot, who had hunted buffalo, also his uncle Alfred Gladue, a freighter. There were 17 in his family.

Peter spent four years with the Calgary Highlanders during World War II. He served extensively as a guide and packer for geologists, forestry officials and oil exploration. Before the war he trapped with "Big Swede" Olaf Peterson.

Christine Campbell was born in Beaverlodge when that was still the name of the post office at Lake Saskatoon and lived on the Alex McDonald farm next to Leo Ferguson. Her father, Walter Emerson Eaton had come from the United States with a railroad survey party and stayed to work for Revillons and the H.B.C., including freighting for them on the Edson Trail. He married Julia Martineau of Sturgeon Lake whom he met while working for Alex Monkman. Besides Chrissie, the family included Clara, a graduate nurse of the Edmonton General Hospital;



Emerson, a carpenter in Edmonton married to Louise Stewart. Frank married Marcella Boudrey of High Prairie and lives at Charlie Lake.

Walter Eaton was a charter member of the Lake Saskatoon Agricultural Society. He was killed while serving overseas in World War I, and his name is on the Lake Saskatoon Honor Roll.

Chrissie received much of her education in a convent in Edmonton. She is a beautiful seamstress. There she married Frank Aldridge, bandmaster of Edmonton's 49th Regiment. They had three children: Francis, married to Eugene Roland of Nebraska; Mabel, married to Harvey Hogg of Goodlow and Beverley married to Wayne Dahlen of Dawson Creek. Later Chrissie returned to Lake Saskatoon, where she married Pete Campbell. They moved to Beaverlodge and have lived there since. While still at Lake Saskatoon, Chrissie was the regular sitter for little Peggy Martin, daughter of George Martin of the Bank of Commerce.

### THE AL CARDER STORY

Sometime in early May in 1935 I left the home farm near Cloverdale, B.C. for what was then regarded as the remote Peace River country. At the farm the cows were knee deep in lush clover and grass and the blossoms of the fruit orchard had long since been replaced by leaves. Several days later, May 14 to be exact, I was to look out the train window at a drab, leafless scene with not a sign of spring. As if this wasn't bad enough there was still the odd snow bank in the ravines! Mud; it was knee deep everywhere in Beaverlodge except on the wooden sidewalks where it was but inches thick. The traumatic shock hounded me for years.

I was to work at the Beaverlodge Experimental Sub-station and apparently that very first day started off on the wrong foot. Mr. Albright met me at the train and with him I toured the town. As we turned to go up the main street there was a full-fledged fight going on - two young men, their feet well planted in the mud, slugging it out in front of Gaudin's store. Mr. Albright and I tarried there. Being an exponent of fair play, I began to back the smaller and losing man. Soon I felt a tap on my shoulder and turning a man said, "If I were you, I'd back the other one." "Why?" I asked. The man said, "He is Albright's son."

In those years I didn't show the respect for Mr. Albright I have gained since. I now consider it one of the great things of my life to have been privileged to work under him.

The following winter I worked in the bush, or was supposed to. The weather got so cold that Billy Johnson, the farmer I was working for, had to curtail this particular farm enterprise. One morning the thermometer read 62 degrees F below. His wife asked him if we were not going to harness up the horses and bring out a load of logs that day and he said, "No, it's too cold." His wife Ruth said, "You used to go out on trips at 70 below in the Athabaska country." And Bill said, "I used oxen then." The next morning it was a few degrees less cold and we went, horses and all. But not Billy Johnson! He was replaced by his brother Doss! Doss was tough!

Perhaps I owe my life to Doss. I had felt miserably cold all day, but finally by mid-afternoon with a load of logs cut and on the sleigh I sat down and the world started looking good. Indeed for the first time that day I felt warm and comfortable. My reverie was rudely interrupted by the end of an axe handle poking me in the groin, in the chest, then a whack or two on the shins. This was too much, I came up fighting mad. This was precisely what Doss wanted and after a tussle he talked a few words of sense into me and we cinched the load and headed home trotting behind it and the horses all seven miles.

The years went by and except for keeping a hoe sharp by use at the Experimental Sub-station I started shuffling pieces of paper about, of which the government always seems to have such an abundance. The war came and I was away for four years. I returned, but not in the spring of the year as that would have been too much of a shock to relive. Soon I bought two acres and set up a shack, where I lived for seven years. For the first two years I paid no land tax as the



Al Carder in the sunflower plots



At the Experimental Farm. Al Carder, Olive Dixon, Janie and Howard Lock leaning against "The Blue Goose".



powers that be were unaware of my existence. But they did catch up and I started paying at the rate of \$19.50 per annum.

While living at the shack I used to leave the country for a year or two at a time to continue my education. My preparations for going were simple. I would throw my needs into a sea-trunk, throw that into the back of the car, drive a six-inch spike through the door into the studding and then throw the hammer under the shack. The next week or so would be spent on the road travelling largely through the States to eastern Canada as there was no all-Canada route at that time. The trip was usually made in the winter and was never boring.

The years went by. One bitter night I sat in the biffy which was 100 feet from my warm shack. It had no door and this night it was 20 below with a northeast wind carrying sifting snow. This was the point where I took my first step down the path of degradation. Next day I put a door on the biffy! Soon I bought an iron bed with springs, later two fancy kitchen chairs. Then I threw out the tin heater and installed an automatic oil stove. Civilization crept closer and with it electric wires. I tapped on and threw out my faithful old lamp.

Shortly after this I went off to England and got married. We moved to a comfortable house, the ultimate step of degradation, and have been serenely happy since. Mary and I did, however live in the shack for a few months. We still talk over those far off days and how we enjoyed listening to the rain on the roof and the rustle of the wind through the grasses round about. In 1970 I retired from the Research Station and we left the Peace River country as a family of five to live on a hill overlooking Cordova Bay, on Vancouver Island.

Friends of Al Carder know him as a top-flight scientist. As such he is schooled in exact terminology, as when he was a passenger in a car driven by Henry Anderson and when they came to a railroad crossing, Hank asked Al if a train was in sight and Al reported negatively. Almost instantly a speeder rushed by with the occupants waving frantically. An accident had been averted by a matter of inches. Angrily, Hank upbraided Carder. Al merely replied serenely, "You asked if a train was coming!"

Or consider the position of Doug McFarlane approaching Al for "approximate" measures on dandelion control on lawns. Al's back stiffened, "I can't give you 'approximate' measures. I can give you EXACT measures."

## MARY CARDER

I first set foot in Canada, as Mary Tidman in May 1949 having sailed from Liverpool, England to Montreal. I crossed Canada by train in company with some other "Van girls", about to disperse to various parts of Canada to drive and teach for the Western Canadian Sunday School Caravans of the Anglican Church. My first summer was spent in the Peace River country, centred at Grande Prairie with Irene Balderston, now Mrs. Thore Johnson of Cherry Point on St. Oswald Van. We visited the outlying areas from Bad Heart to Mountain View, from Crooked Creek to Brainard checking those taking Sunday School by Post papers, holding vacation schools and conducting services. We

often parked in the yards of those we visited. One unforgettable night we were rudely awakened by the violent rocking of the entire van; we were convinced we were experiencing an earthquake, but were much relieved to find that it was merely two of Wilbrod Dupont's horses using our vehicle as a scratching post!

We chewed dust and slopped and slid through Peace River mud. There was always someone to give us a tow or bulldoze the van through a bad stretch, while I hung on with my eyes shut. Towards the end of the summer of 1949 a soft boulder caused us to take to the ditch near Wembley on the old highway; witnesses to the ditching approached the scene cautiously for fear of finding two corpses but Van girls, the English ones are tougher than that!

We proudly drew the Anglican Church float across the newly opened Smoky Bridge in the parade depicting the history of that area. The Anglican Church was celebrating its 75th Anniversary that year.

After a winter in Athabasca I again returned to the Grande Prairie van in May 1950, with Daphne Holdsworth as my companion. We had been warned about not giving rides to students, especially theological students. Despite this we managed to enjoy a certain amount of social life meeting other types also travelling the countryside, crop inspectors, agricultural research officers and even a future Bishop.

I returned home in November 1950 and it was not until four years later that I returned to Beaverlodge as Al Carder's bride on July 31, 1954. Having been unceremoniously pushed over the windowsill (a far cry from being carried over the threshold!) because the Emes had the key and they were out, I found that the sheets had to be picked up from Mrs. Hanson's and water pumped and carried from Mel Howey's well two blocks away, and I began to wonder if I had made the right decision!

I soon learned that I had for there at Beaverlodge in the Peace River country we found a free, happy life where there was time and space to face and sort out the big issues of life; we learned the meaning of hospitality and a good time, of neighbourly concern that supported in times of trouble and celebrated in times of joy — a gentle atmosphere in which to give our children a fine foundation on which to build their future lives. Our children were all born in Beaverlodge: Judith in 1957, Mary-Clare in 1959 and Andrew in 1966.

The Carders have now retired in Victoria and provide a haven for Beaverlodge tourists visiting the Island. Al is vigorously trying to cope with vegetation on their lot at Point No Point and finishing a cottage there while Mary, along with church and other community work, serves as a docent in the B.C. Provincial Museum.

Judith and Mary Clare are now quite grown up but Andrew continues to be himself and as unpredictable as his father. It is sorry to relate that the Carder's Beaverlodge Kittens, Columbus and Socrates are no longer around but their place has been taken by Copernicus, a prize winner in a recent Pet Fair by virtue of having the longest tail in the show!



While Mary was in Beaverlodge she gave freely of her time and talents musically. There were her many pupils in piano, those in violin, the Junior Choirs she led, the many occasions for which she played the piano and organ in concerts and at the Elmworth and Beaverlodge church services and let us not forget her as a band member and the drum major of the parade.

#### **PHILIP H. CASTLE — by Violet Davis**

His ancestry was English. He was born in Liverpool, England on May 16th, 1897. His parents came to Canada in 1906 bringing with them their family of three boys — Phil was the eldest. They settled in Saskatoon where the boys grew up. During the World War I Phil served four years in the Canadian Navy. Later he took some University courses and articulated with a chartered accountant firm in Calgary where he was trained for three years before deciding he didn't want to spend the rest of his life working indoors. Then he went to work for United Grain Growers in southern Alberta. He was offered an opportunity to manage the U.G.G. elevator in Grande Prairie commencing May 1st, 1927 and on April 17th, he was married in Calgary to Violet Pangford and together they moved to Grande Prairie two weeks later.

Violet Castle was of English, Irish, Scottish descent. She was born in Ontario, came to Alberta in 1910 with her parents and attended school in Edmonton. In 1920 she went to work for Alberta Government Telephones as stenographer, first in Edmonton, then in Calgary.

The Castles lived in Grande Prairie until November, 1928 when Phil decided to work for the Alberta Wheat Pool. Then they moved to Beaverlodge to open the new Alberta Wheat Pool elevator there, and he and Violet became part of that community from then until the summer of 1936 when Phil was promoted to position of elevator supervisor and they moved to Edmonton where they lived for a year and then moved to Vermilion, Alberta which was the centre of Phil's territory.

In Vermilion they bought a house and lot and did remodelling and landscaping during the next few years while a son, Frederick Stephen and a daughter, Phyllis Catherine brought much joy to the household. On September 16th, 1943 Phil was injured in a fall while inspecting grain in the annex of one of the elevators. He was taken to hospital where he died a few hours later — and with his sudden and tragic death our little world was shattered —

After that the children and I remained in our Vermilion home for a time, but eventually we moved to Edmonton where they went to school, grew up, married and established homes of their own.

In 1964 I married Arthur Davis of Clover Bar, a long-time family friend. Unfortunately Arthur's health was not too good and in 1968 he died after a brief illness. A year later I sold my house and moved into the home of my son and daughter-in-law, where I still reside and am the proud grandmother of four lovely grandchildren.

Phil and I were part of the Beaverlodge community from 1928 to 1936, sharing its hopes and dreams, and problems. Much of this time was during the "Depres-

sion Years" when money was scarce and it required a great deal of co-operation and community effort and spirit to build the sidewalks, skating rink, curling rink, sports field and other facilities which were needed in such a new little town; but everyone worked at it and gradually these things were accomplished, and Beaverlodge grew and became a very active and interesting place in which to live.

Social life in the town was pretty much a collective "do it yourself" project. First there had to be community organization to build the facilities then more organization to put them into use for sports. In winter it was skating, curling, hockey etc. and in summer — May 24th was "Beaverlodge annual Sports Day" where all surrounding districts came to participate and compete in ball games and field sports. Usually groups from the Women's Institute or churches manned the refreshment booths and provided food and coffee for the dance at night while others, mostly the men organized and managed the field activities. On more casual days, if one had time for it, there was swimming (in the river), golf (in Flint's cow pasture) picnic suppers on hot days and frequent "sports days" in neighboring communities. On rainy nights or in the winter evenings there was visiting and card games. Occasionally a picture show came to town and was viewed in the old community hall, the only place large enough to hold a crowd. This hall was used as a community centre for meetings of all kinds, and also for fund-raising teas, parties, turkey shoots, Christmas concerts and dances, and between times it became a badminton court where one could drop in for a game during the evening or to watch or participate when tournaments were being played. The school and churches provided activities of entertainment and interest in the community too.

So much for the town. In the surrounding countryside, new interest stirred there too when the railroad was built through Beaverlodge in 1928 and it then became possible to ship grain, livestock and other commodities to, and from outside markets by train. Previously the railroad tracks had ended at Wembley and everything had to be loaded or unloaded at this point which meant a long haul for most of the farmers. The improved marketing conditions encouraged an increase in the production of farm produce, grain and livestock, and also brought new settlers into the district to open up more farming areas. The future looked good; people seemed optimistic and cheerful, and this spirit undoubtedly helped carry them through the crisis of the stock market crash in 1929 and the low grain prices that followed through the 1930 years.

One great advantage which helped the Beaverlodge district was having in its midst the Government Experimental Station operated by W. D. Albright and his staff, including E. C. Stacey, who were able to dispense information on plants and soil conditions throughout the Peace River area.

Perhaps too, mention should be made of the fact that during this time "Wheat King" Herman Trelle won top awards for wheat grown on his farm at Wembley, thus drawing wide attention to the agricultural possibilities of the Peace River country.



As for its people — they were what made it “tick”! Their personal experiences, their wonderful friendship, the good times and the bad times — will, I am sure, never be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to have participated in the adventures of those early days.

So, this then is a few of the “memories” of life in the Beaverlodge Valley and in its struggling friendly little town, from 1928 to 1936.

#### JIM AND ESCOTTE CASTLEMAN

Jim Castleman was born in 1875 at Dundela, Ontario. In 1901 he married Ida Jean Escotte Wickham of Boundary Falls, B.C. What happened that brought Jim to B.C. or back here to homestead in the Lower Beaverlodge district in 1918 we don't know. Knowing Jim, he probably told a dozen people a dozen stories about that time — all of which would have been highly entertaining but not necessarily factual.

What we do know of the Castlemans is good. They were good neighbors and shared in community events. Mrs. Castleman was a college graduate and taught the Lower Beaverlodge school for three or four years. One girl who went to school to her had the highest praise for her teaching. She said she not only taught them the three R's — she also taught them a philosophy of life. At recesses and noons when it was too cold to go out she taught the girls how to knit and embroider. No idle hands for her! Jim farmed and practised his blacksmithing trade as well.

In 1926 they sold out to Carl Muir and moved to Wembley. There Jim had a Cockshutt agency and Mrs. Castleman ran a grocery shop. While there she was also the school secretary. The Castlemans had no children.

In the 1930's they moved to Beaverlodge where Jim ran a blacksmith shop. One man recalls “the mighty arms of that man! And man! He could pound out a plow-share and tell a yarn at the same time.” Jim was famous for his tall tales — about his years at the coast — in the police force — as a motorcycle cop at New Westminster, filing saws for a saw mill, hunting criminals in the Arctic, etc. etc. — but his stories were never malicious. Mrs. Castleman enjoyed them too and would often remind him of one to set him going again.

While in Beaverlodge he was Justice of the Peace and she was Registrar of Vital Statistics. Jim always claimed, when a couple came to get their marriage license, that it was his duty to kiss the bride — a duty in which he never failed.

Jim Castleman was one of the original members of the first band organized in Beaverlodge, playing an alto horn. He is said to have been instrumental in helping form the band and holding it together.

Mrs. Castleman died in 1943 and Jim in 1948. Both are buried in the Beaverlodge Cemetery.

Jim Castleman took himself seriously — or so it seemed. No one was quite sure. It was worth the price of a trip to town to call in at the shop and chat for a while.

Before homesteading in the Lower Beaverlodge district he was already famous; during World War One he was the leading, well, almost — high ranking Remount

Buyer. He would station himself at a convenient gate on some ranch where horses, selected for Canada's war effort were run through on a gallop, he'd tell you, and his quick eye unfailingly chose the top performers. His best day, he'd remember, was the hasty appraisal of 1,600 horses with only three rejects.

As a charter member of the Beaverlodge Band, he didn't read music; someone wrote out the fingering. Jim was faithful to his horn. Ability is sometimes the art of mastering deficiencies.

One morning, as a hunter south of LaGlace, he was proud of the four guns he had brought along as arsenal. Gun No. 1 was to take the geese as they appeared on the horizon; Gun No. 2 was to take them overhead. Number 3, and 4 were for close-range shooting. The plan was well thought out and repeated verbally several times. Finally the geese winged in sight. But no shots were fired from Guns 1 to 4. There was no time to adjust schedules. The geese flew too high.

A lacrosse racket was gathering dust on the rack above the forge. “Yes,” recalled Jim, “I was a member of the New Westminster Salmonbellies the year they won the Canadian Championship.” Who were we to dispute?

One day Judd Perry came home with the news. The Mad Trapper of Aklavik was no more. Jim said so — and he ought to know. The RCMP had called yesterday, flown Jim to Aklavik where he went into action and now was back at his forge. Sorry for customers inconvenienced while the shop was closed!

#### THE BEAVERLODGE ALLIANCE CHURCH — by Flora Foster

The Beaverlodge church was hastily built in 1936 by Rev. Hugh Campbell, a Baptist minister. He left shortly afterwards and the Baptist organization in Grande Prairie sent Rev. Vine Ashdown to carry on the work. The first congregation consisted of Rev. Ashdown and the Chris Overn family. Many wintry Sundays they gathered around the old wood stove, seeking relief from the winds which blew in around the doors, a bleak picture indeed. Perhaps the town folks can be forgiven for having referred to it as “the Church on the rocks”.

The Alliance church has come a long way since those trying days and has given indisputable evidence that, rather than being the “Church on the rocks” it has from its beginning been the “Church on the Rock”.

In 1941 the church became affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The first members were Mabel and Chris Overn, Dora and Walter Dyrkach, Blanche and Norman Stubbs and Mrs. Jens Rask. Mr. Ashdown left Beaverlodge in 1942 and since has been followed by nine faithful pastors: Rev. N. J. Galbraith, Rev. George Hart, Rev. D. E. Jane, Rev. G. McGarvey, Rev. J. Harder, Rev. Harold Dirks, Rev. D. Morscheck, Rev. C. D. House and Rev. S. Palmer.

The congregation outgrew the old building on 3rd. Avenue, and in January 1960 the new sanctuary valued at \$50,000 was dedicated to the work and Glory of God. Under the leadership of faithful pastors the work continued to show progress so that in a few years the facilities were again found to be inadequate.

In 1967 a building fund was again launched to

enlarge the seven-year-old structure. Penner Construction of Beaverlodge commenced work on the addition. On June 15, 1969 the present building was dedicated. It is evident that God's good hand of blessing has continued on the work. Many souls have been saved, young people have entered Bible school and Colleges and many today represent the Beaverlodge Alliance church at home and overseas in Christian ministries.

#### BEAVERLODGE UNITED CHURCH — by Verne Johnson

I was a very small boy when this story began so much of what I have to say is from impressions made on me at a very tender age and may not necessarily agree with a more adult viewpoint; however there are very few of those people around now to disagree with the way I recall it.

In the beginning, to borrow from the Book of Genesis, God created the heaven, the earth, and this Beaverlodge valley was just as God had seen fit to build it when my grandfather Oliver Johnson and Rede Stone first saw it in 1908.

They travelled by pack train from Edmonton to look over this area of virgin land that they had heard of from prospectors going overland to hunt for gold in the fabulous Klondike days of the Yukon and Alaska. They found the Beaverlodge Valley to their liking and returned in April 1909 with their families: sons, daughters, sons-in-law and all, and settled here.

My grandfather built a stopping place and a trading post on the hill north of the present town of Beaverlodge where Jack Gaudin now lives and called it Stony Point by which name it is still known to a few of the older residents of the district.

During the summer of 1909 there was a considerable influx of settlers and Stony Point became a central gathering point due to the hospitality and generosity of grandfather, and to a no less degree the kindness and consideration of my grandmother Mary. Having several daughters of marriageable age may have had some bearing on this development but that is another story.

At about this time an ordained Methodist minister, "Charlie" Hopkins, as he was best known homesteaded on the north side of Lake Saskatoon and grandmother Mary seeking the need for spiritual guidance made their home available to him. Two Johnson girls agreed to ride around the neighbourhood and promised to have a congregation ready for him on Sunday. They did their task well and on Sunday the Johnson living room was full, thus the first church service in this area was held there in 1910.

For this and for her continued service to the church until her death in 1942 she was honored by this area by being named Mother of our church and her picture hangs in the vestibule of the present Beaverlodge United Church. The Baptismal Font is also inscribed to her memory.

By 1910 the whole Grande Prairie area was rapidly becoming settled and Rev. Hopkins was put in charge of the interests of the Methodist church. Student ministers came here to work under his guidance. For the first few years, he being a single man and busy

improving his virgin land, they lived with him and worked for their board and room and travelled from there to their various appointments.

The first of these adventurous students was a young man by the name of Armstrong, who in 1910 helped Rev. Hopkins build his house, a frame house which was really something at that time and which is still being used on the farm at Lake Saskatoon.

As this was the year I was born my memory of him is very limited but it appears he found a bride here and returned to Ontario, after which he unfortunately passed away suddenly.

He was followed by Andy Telfer, who according to legend travelled on snowshoes in winter from Lake Saskatoon to Stony Point, a distance of about 16 miles to hold church services. He was here one year. Later he and his brother were in the Canadian Army in the First World War and were both killed, two days apart.

Another young student minister, Harry Coates stayed with Rev. Hopkins along with Andy Telfer. Rev. Hopkins being a very realistic sort of man, had these two young men dig a well for him during the week days. Apparently they dug a few dry holes before hitting water. They spent most of the summer digging, probably which tried their faith somewhat and made them slightly disgruntled with the treatment accorded them.

Until 1912 school was held at Beaverlodge in various log shacks, until a log school building was built where the N. D. McFarlane residence now stands. This was used as a church until 1922 when a new frame school was built. The old log school was moved to the top of the hill and purchased by the church.

It is interesting to note here that the need for a high school arose in 1925 so the old log building, now a church, was put back into service again as a high school.

After 1912 the era of the ministers residing with Rev. Hopkins seemed to end and they then lived with farmers in the immediate area, or if married, in an available abandoned homestead house.

In the next few years, pre-World War I, the student ministers were G. A. Kettlys, who later joined the army, a Mr. Puffer who unfortunately died of appendicitis and a Mr. Hager.

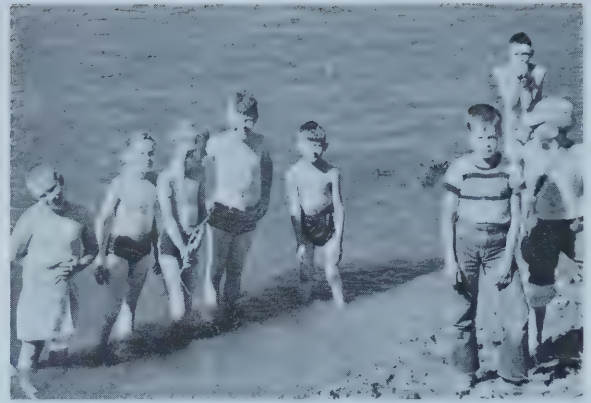


W. A. Presidents, Bentum United Church. Mrs. G. A. Little, Mrs. Ed Heller, Mrs. Jim Whyte, Mrs. Verne Johnson, Mrs. Ted Hodgson, Mrs. Jack Cox.





The Men's Valentine Tea, United Church. Left to right: Murray Lay, Alf Bayer, Roy Longson, blank, Jack Dobb, Cliff Stacey, Al Truax. Sitting—Clarence Howe, Peter McNaughton.



At the Boys' Camp, Red Willow River.



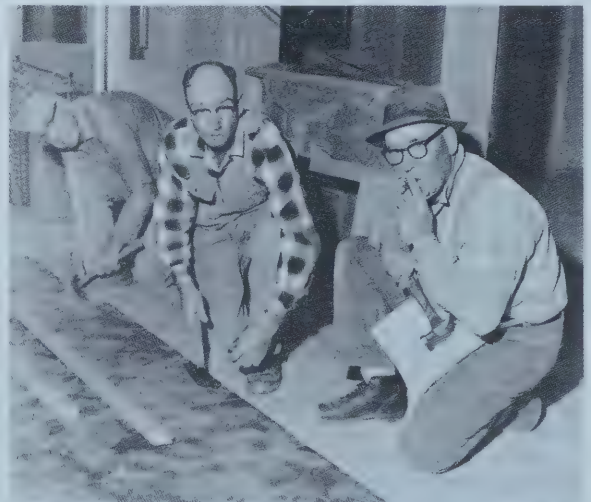
Mrs. Banting's Tyros. Top row: Howard Johnson, D'Arcy Nichol, Dwight Hill, Walter Johnson, Jeryl Jaque. Middle row: Bruce Nichol, John Bayer, Hugh Stacey. Bottom: Jim Nichol, Stanley Bristow.



United Church Sunday School picnicking at Don Sherks.



Turning the sod of the new United Church, Cliff Stacey, Johnny Johnson, Rev. Don Frame, Rev. Barry Moore.



Cliff Stacey, Vern Hill, Verne Johnson laying hardwood in the new United Church.



Mr. Hager loved mushrooms and whenever he dropped in for a meal, and he being a bachelor that was quite often, my mother sent me out looking for mushrooms, which she would cook for him. Mr. Hager devoured them with great relish and with great faith, it always seemed to me, that I had not picked any poisonous varieties.

Rev. Arthur Thorpe was here for a year or so and in 1916 Rev. Brooks, an ordained Methodist minister was the shepherd of the flock. A few years ago I heard of him preaching in California so apparently he survived his ordeal in this pioneer land.

In 1917 a Mr. Horne came to Beaverlodge to teach school and being a very talented individual, he also preached on Sunday. I remember him well as I went to school to him for two years. He was a very kind and considerate gentleman.

In the next few years there were a succession of student ministers. One was Bill McDonald, who really couldn't preach but was well liked as he was an excellent ball player and thought nothing of getting church over early in order to make it to the ball game Sunday afternoon.

Tom Gilroy, a young single man who besides being a very sincere young minister, was an accomplished violinist, which added a new tone to church. He also accompanied the organ during the hymns.

We seemed to have a succession of musical talent at this time, which was a real asset to a music-starved community, as his successor Mr. O'Brien who travelled by saddle horse and dressed more or less cowboy style, played the guitar. Not in the modern thumping style but with a steel and pick, or Hawaiian style, and he could play beautifully.

He was followed by W. A. Deepprose in 1926, also an excellent violinist. Mr. Deepprose quit the ministry after his sojourn here and became a teacher.

Up to this time it must be remembered that the roads were mostly just trails and travel was confined to saddle horse or team with cutter or buggy depending on the season and all these ministers had to put up with considerable hardship in their work.

I can't leave this period without some mention of Mr. Paul Flint. Mr. Flint was an ordained Methodist minister in Ontario and was compelled to leave the ministry because of his beliefs and teachings that were not compatible with the church at that time. It is interesting to note that, as far as I can gather those beliefs were practically identical to the new United Church curriculum. Mr. Flint was born 60 years too soon.

Mr. Flint homesteaded here in 1909, his grandchildren still live in the district. He never actually served as a minister here but he was always available as a very talented and entertaining speaker and certainly served the community in that capacity. He will be remembered by those fortunate enough to know him, as a wise and gentle man who had the courage to be different.

1928 was the beginning of a new era in the valley. The railroad came in that year and the roads had improved somewhat so that cars came into more or less general use in summertime. The town of Beaverlodge began on its present site and a new church was needed.

Rev. Arthur Bentum came here in 1926 and he was instrumental in building the Bentum United Church, which is now the Lutheran church, complete with an adjoining manse. In 1925 the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches in Canada had united to form the United Church of Canada. This movement started in 1898.

In the next several years various ministers served the United Church congregation and the church prospered. Their photos hang in the narthex of the present church.

In 1940 under the guidance of Rev. Tom Jackson the church board decided the time had arrived to take the step from a mission charge to a self-supporting church and with some trepidation this was done. From then on the church here has been self-supporting.

For a number of years Sunday school was held in the basement of Bentum United church. The facilities were never adequate and gradually became overcrowded until in the term of Rev. Meredith Banting and under his leadership Bentum Hall was purchased. This was a great improvement for the Sunday School and the hall was also used by the W.A. for banquets and for church gatherings.

The need for a new church had by this time become a predominant issue in the congregation. Finally under the leadership of Rev. Barry Moore the present Beaverlodge United Church was built and dedicated November 22, 1964.

In recent years there has been a succession of able ministers and their capable wives to serve the church: Rev. Arthur Young and wife Meg came to us from Montney, B.C., Rev. Arthur Thrower and his wife Edith, a trained sociologist, Rev. Doug Carr, a handsome young bachelor who liked a Sunday afternoon ball game and left here to fill his father's pastorate in Steveston, B.C. when his father died. Bob and Inez Gates — positive forthright folks, she a nurse, and well liked. Someone recalls a lady saying to Bob after one of his sermons, "You've got a good sermon there boy! You'd better hang on to it."

Rev. Don and Lee Fraser came next. Don will be remembered for his bagpipes and his being a welcoming committee of one to greet Governor General Massey at the station with his pipes when the official train stopped for five minutes en route to Dawson Creek. Both Don and Lee were very musical, he sang in the mixed chorus. The "Wells Campaign" was also a feature of the Fraser regime. Don is now teaching high school in Ontario.

Rev. Rice was an elderly retired man who came to Beaverlodge to fill out Rev. Fraser's unexpectedly vacant term. He is remembered for his "cottage meetings", the number of people he baptized and brought into the church and his proof that the "furnace in the manse really worked" — his fuel bill being extremely large. We helped him celebrate his 80th birthday. He visited freely and was willing to share "Rice" in any home.

Rev. Meredith Banting and wife Florence were another very active outgoing pair. Mrs. Banting pitched in and did whatever needed doing — even to leading a boys' Tyro group. Mr. Banting was a great public relations man — getting out brochures, appear-



ing on T.V. and radio and organizing special events. None of his congregation will forget his ability with the violin which he played with his mitts on — behind his back or between his legs.

Rev. Barry Moore — a young Ontario bachelor was with us for five years. He related extremely well to his congregation and inspired them to build a new church. Barry played in the band, sang with the "Brothers Grimm" and played basketball. Mrs. Gossen cared for him at the manse until his marriage to Erika Anderson. Barry was so excited about the double occasion of the church dedication and their wedding a few days later that he had his wife's wedding ring inscribed with the date of the church opening instead of their wedding day. Dr. Moore is now assistant dean of the Grande Prairie Regional College.

Rev. Fred Milnes and his wife, Marion came from Mayerthorpe. Both were very talented musically, Fred sang and played in the Band. Marion had a trained voice which she generously shared with their congregation. Their two boys were born here. Fred went into social work in Edmonton when they left but we hear he's back in the ministry in Ontario now.

Rev. David and Anne Pype, also Ontario born brought their own special talents — David excelled in the counselling part of his work. Anne who had a degree in sociology was a big help to the W.A. in their studies and the sole leader of the C.G.I.T. The Pypes had a real concern for unfortunate and handicapped children.

Rev. Clinton and Irene Swallow and their family of five were here only two years. Clint put a lot of real effort into his work and the both had an affinity with young people. He was the first minister to have to cope with the Beaverlodge, Hythe and Wembley charges but had young peoples groups going very effectively in all three towns. They were planning to leave the charge to open a foster home for needy children when they were killed in a tragic car accident June 27, 1974.

### GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Grace Lutheran Church had its beginning with an organizational meeting at the home of Arnold Hennig on March 15, 1964. After several such meetings it was decided to open a Beaverlodge Mission out of the Wembley and Goodfare Parish. The first service was held in July of that year in the former Bentum United Church. Six months later the building was purchased with a loan from the Church Extension Department of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. Repayment of the borrowed \$5,000 was completed in December 1973.

The Church was named Grace Lutheran and became a sister congregation in the Parish of Wembley-Goodfare, with about 40 communicant members. The dedication service was on June 19, 1966.

The original members of the Beaverlodge Congregation came from Wembley, Goodfare, Demmitt, Hythe and Beaverlodge. Among them were the families of M. Schuller Sr., M. Schuller Jr., F. Salecker, E. Pfau, N. Tiesenhansen, A. Hennig, G. Henn, F. Wills, Mrs. L. Schweitzer, Mrs. B. Pfau, Mrs. K. Heikel and Miss J. Toset.

Grace Lutheran Church was served by Pastor E. Rath until October, 1971 when he accepted a call to

Kelowna B.C. During the vacancy the church was served by Pastor Richter of Dawson Creek, B.C. In February of 1972, Pastor C. Borchardt of The Pas, Manitoba accepted the call to Regina. Pastor Schultz of Grande Prairie was vacancy pastor until December 1973, when Pastor D. Lentz arrived to serve the Wembley, Goodfare and Beaverlodge congregations.

### JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

As the community developed, members of the Jehovah's Witnesses commenced to meet in homes for services. By 1954 their numbers had increased to the point where they needed more accommodation, hence they built Kingdom Hall in Beaverlodge. Shortly afterwards the congregation hosted a massive South Peace Assembly as an indication of its viability. Leonard Fugill has been the Congregation Servant.

But in time many of the early pioneers died or had moved on. Kingdom Hall in Beaverlodge was closed in 1971 and better facilities were found to be available in Grande Prairie. Thus, the needs of the congregation will be served, even though outside this locality.



Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall — with lean-to for use by the Assembly.

### THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE AREA WEST OF LAKE SASKATOON — by L. R. Emes

In early days missionaries signed on for a period of five years to be more or less self-supporting and to serve under the Archbishop of Canterbury Mission of Help to Western Canada.

Back in 1912 three Englishmen, Professor Green, Major Hugh Speke and Mr. C. W. Trevellyn had signed up and were missionaries at Lake Saskatoon. It seems Mr. Green was the only one of the three who was not ordained. He had been a professor at a university in England. He attended to the chores — the chief cook and bottle washer and keeper of the purse strings and offered to teach Latin or Greek to anyone interested.

Lake Saskatoon was more or less the centre of a large territory. A hostel had been built by Rev. F. W. Moxbay under instructions from Bishop Holmes, and it served as a rectory as well as the original purpose of supplying hospitality to the travellers passing through. The territory served was east to Grande Prairie and on to the Smoky, west to the B.C. boundary, and on some occasions through to Pouce Coupe in B.C.

It was hardly a month after the First World War was started when the three packed up and walked out to return to England and rejoin the Army. Professor Green and Major Hugh Speke paid the supreme



St. Luke's Church and rectory, 1933.



St. Luke's Anglican Church—1955.



The St. Luke's Players. Upper (L-R) Les Emes, Doug Mackie, Rev. Houndle, Ed Whiteman, Betty McNaught, Peter Harris. Lower: Margaret McNaught, Thirza Harris, "Mish" Houndle.



Ellen McLeary, later Mrs. S. R. Semple.

Church service at St. Mark's Anglican.





sacrifice. Mr. Trevellyn was severely wounded and was returned to England.

Up to this time Anglican Church services in the Appleton district were being held in the home of Mr. Charles McNaught. In 1912 the Government donated 10 acres of Crown land for church purposes and Canon Smith, and Miss Marion McNaught picked the site on a rise of land just south of the McNaught quarter.

Before coming to Canada, Canon F. D. Smith, formerly associated with Bishop Taylor in Sierra Leone had gathered funds for the erection of small churches at what he thought to be strategic points in the district. Thus churches were built at Richmond Hill, Hermit Lake, Bear Lake, Cutbank Lake, Beaverlodge and Appleton.

When Green, Speke and Trevellyn left to return to England, Bishop Robins placed the Rev. Robert Holmes, who had been the veteran missionary to the Indians of the Shaftsbury Settlement, in Lake Saskatoon to have overall charge of two younger men, one at Grande Prairie, the Rev. J. W. McDonald, and the other Rev. F. V. Abbott, at Appleton.

In the autumn of 1914 Rev. Abbott started holding services in the church at Appleton, and the following year moved to the Appleton district, staying at the home of Bert Elcome. Partitioning off the one-room cabin with blankets, he and Mrs. Abbott and baby daughter, Kathleén made their home there till the church house was erected, with a grant of \$800.00 and the help of a skilled Old Country carpenter, Mr. Tom Funnell, Senior and the assistance of Frank Tole, Bert Elcome and Rev. Abbott.

For the following few years prayer meetings were held during the winter in the church house, alternated by the United and Anglican ministers. The lectern, prayer desk and font in the church were made by Mr. Funnell and donated by George Martin.

In the church built on the corner lot in the old town-site of Beaverlodge in 1913 by Bill Johnson, services were held sporadically.

Rev. Abbot was the first resident minister for the district they called Appleton and he named the church St. Mark's. It is interesting to note that Mr. and Mrs. George Martin of this community were the first couple married in this little church in 1915. Their two daughters were also christened in this same church. Some fifty odd years later, the church having been moved to the village of Hythe, a great-grandson was also christened in the same church.

The Rev. J. W. McDonald of Christ Church at Grande Prairie went overseas as a Military Chaplain. Rev. Holmes moved to Grande Prairie and he and Rev. Abbott held services at Lake Saskatoon, alternating each Sunday, till July 20th, 1916, when Rev. Holmes died suddenly after giving an address at a Church Garden Party. It was this turn of events that prompted the transfer of Rev. Abbott to Christ Church, Grande Prairie, late in 1916.

Rev. R. E. Randall was placed at Lake Saskatoon that fall but his health was poor so he left early in 1917 for the Diocese of Edmonton. Rev. C. F. Washburn took his place and covered the western district. Two years later his health broke down. He was the first clergyman in the diocese to use a car. I hope it was the

vagaries of the Model T Ford that broke his health and not the church work. Rev. Abbott tried to cover the entire field from Christ Church in Grande Prairie and did so up to the time of his departure from the diocese in October of 1920. The last five months he had help from Rev. J. A. Burness, who carried on at Lake Saskatoon until 1924.

Travelling for the most part was by buckboard, or cutter in the winter, and saddle horse when road conditions were bad — and that was bad! Try riding a horse with a portable organ and the rest of your over-night gear! I think it would need a revival of forgotten words in my vocabulary.

Rev. Abbott held services from time to time at Mr. Avery Kenny's homestead on the north bank of the Red Willow, which was the beginning of All Saints at Rio Grande, and also at Mr. Tom Funnell's at Halcourt and Mr. Boyd's homestead south-west of Lake Saskatoon.

It was on June 12th, 1921, that Rev. C. H. Quarterman held his first service in St. Mark's Church at Appleton. He ministered to the needs of the district till he left to become the incumbent at St. James at Peace River in February, 1927. During his tenure he had services in different settlers' homes at Halcourt and at Avery Kenny's on the banks of the Red Willow, and at Goodfare and Beaverlodge when conditions permitted. On May 15th, 1927, Rev. and Mrs. H. Innes Law took residence at Appleton. The district was growing. More and more settlers had come in and were still coming in, clearing the land and forming settlements, with better roads.

All Saints Church at Rio Grande was built by Mr. Mortwedt, and on July 29th, 1928, the first service was held, with an attendance of 110. Rev. Quarterman was asked to officiate. So the services held at Avery Kenny's home had born fruit. Bishop Robbins dedicated All Saints on August 19th, with an attendance of 60.

Rev. Law held services at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. Barr, Elmworth, south of the Red Willow to serve the settlement on the south side of the Red Willow river. After Mr. and Mrs. Barr moved to the coast, services were held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Len Williams. This was the early start of our church at Elmworth. Later on the congregations of both United and Anglican Church and others got together and built a Community Church.

Other communities that were growing fast were Goodfare, and northwest of that.

In the fall of 1928 the railway was completed to Hythe. The hamlet of Beaverlodge, situated on the side of a hill was moved down to the floor of the valley, where the railway had surveyed a townsite and it was filling up with businessmen and residents.

Rev. Innes Law and Mr. John McNaught and his mother Mrs. Charles McNaught came into the writer's store to wait for Bishop Robbins and Archdeacon Little, who had driven over from Peace River to hold a meeting and pick out lots the N.A.R. were to give to the Diocese for the church and house. The Bishop decided to visit for a few minutes with an old friend, the late I. E. Gaudin, a member of the Burnsides. The Archdeacon came on up to my store. We waited, then

got tired and decided to go and look for a site and have it ready for the Bishop's approval. We got back to the store and waited and waited again — finally he came and announced that the lots were picked out — and that was that, the Anglicans had no say after all.

It was in the winter of 1928-29 when the church building, sitting on the corner lot in the old townsite, where Mr. E. C. Stacey now lives was moved down after the lots in the town had been decided upon.

A railway contractor, Mr. George Brownlee, Rycroft who had finished a grading contract for the railroad moved the building down and set it up on blocks for \$60.00. Six of us had put up \$10.00 each. We had a chancel built at one end, and a small porch on the other. It remained that size when it was moved to Valleyview in 1955 or '56.

It was soon apparent that St. Luke's at Beaverlodge would be the centre of activities, so it was decided to move the rectory at Appleton, only four miles south of Beaverlodge, into town beside St. Luke's Church, and St. Mark's Church at Appleton into the village of Hythe. It seemed sad moving these buildings from their original sites but the coming of the railroad and shifting population into villages is all early history of our church.

The church retained its name on moving to Hythe and was located on two lots that the Christian Missionary Alliance bought from us when we moved to the corner of 10th street and 3rd avenue in 1937. The first recorded service in Hythe was on July 7th, 1929 with J. Elton Scott, (Fellowship of the West), officiating. After St. Mark's had been moved Rev. Law held regular services.

Rev. Law left on May 31st, 1931 to take up duties at Colinton and the parish was without a resident man for a year. In the meantime Rev. R. Strachan from Wembley (Lake Saskatoon) filled in the best he could. The ministers travelled and covered a large territory, which took in Hinton Trail, Elmworth, Rio Grande, Halcourt, Hayfield, Goodfare, Hythe and North Beaverlodge. Since the advent of the motor car and better roads the distance seems shorter.

Rev. H. W. L. Harrison, a bachelor who had suffered from shellshock in World War I was the next resident minister, coming from Montreal in May of 1932. I drove him many, many times, both by car and team and cutter and have heard him preach all three sermons on entirely different subjects, without notes and sometimes with his eyes closed, completely worn out at the end of the day. He was writing a book while here. He resigned in May of 1934 and went back to London, England and later studied medicine at Oxford.

In June, 1934, Rev. Sidney Semple, who some time after World War I served in the British Army in Aden and had spent his student years at Teslin Lake, B.C. while studying Theology in Vancouver, came to St. Luke's. This was his first parish after being ordained. He later married an Edmonton girl. Shortly before World War II he left for Ontario and during the war held church services right in the wartime factories.

During the summer of '38 a summer student, R. J. Godkin filled in, and in October Rev. N. Calland arrived from Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan and stayed with us until the Second World War called him in 1942

as Army Chaplain. After his discharge from the army he served in the parishes of Berwyn and Spirit River and in 1950 moved to Abbotsford, B.C. He retired in 1972 and now resides at Mission City and substitutes on Sunday where needed.

With Rev. Calland going into the Chaplaincy, Beaverlodge parish was left without a resident minister until June 1944. The ministers at Wembley did their best, supplying the needs of the parish, with the help of students — Rev. E. Wright of Wembley for the winter of 1942-43; K. D. Patterson, student, J. H. Condy, student, for the summer of 1943; and Rev. G. H. Crane-Williams of Wembley. Rev. H. McSherry arrived in June 1944.

Rev. Harold McSherry came to Beaverlodge a single man but took on the responsibility of married life a few years later. It must have been this that made him work so hard. He sold the old rectory that had been moved into town the winter of 1928-29 and was still in use till around 1945-46, when it was sold and moved to 5th Avenue. The present rectory was built in the spring of 1946.

The Community Church at Elmworth was built in 1949 by community effort. All denominations were to have use of this church. The first service was held in the basement in June 1950. Rev. McSherry had donated money for a Font in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Dickinson. The pulpit was donated in memory of Mr. Gordon Moyer, and the organ donated by the Pandachuck families in memory of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Nick Pandachuck.

Rev. and Mrs. McSherry left for work in Japan, and on his return to Canada he took a parish at Richmond, B.C.

Rev. I. Batten, followed by Rev. Stan Hills, came next. Mr. Ted Houndle, a lay reader was appointed to take charge in the fall of 1951. He studied theology the first year he was here, and was ordained priest at Peace River. Beaverlodge, Hythe and district Anglicans went over to witness and to wish him well. It was during his tenure that the present church was purchased and moved from Rolla, B.C. Both Mr. and Mrs. Houndle were devoted to their work, and it was Mrs. Houndle, ('Mish' as we used to call her), who with the great help of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Harris, staged religious plays for four consecutive years, up and down the country from Dawson Creek to Peace River and Edmonton. Mr. and Mrs. Peter Harris had been professional players in England before coming to Canada. I firmly believe that it was the depth of these plays that led Peter to study Theology at London, Ontario in 1959 and become the lay reader at Berwyn during the summer of 1960. He was ordained in 1961 and went to Fort McMurray, moving to Cobble Hill on Vancouver Island in 1965. He remained there until his death in 1968. Mrs. Houndle was in poor health the last few years at Beaverlodge and it was this that prompted their move to the Coast in 1958.

Early in January, 1958, Rev. and Mrs. Glen H. Ash moved to Beaverlodge from Colinton, and it was while he was here the necessity for a hall became apparent, and the present church hall was built. He left in September, 1963 for Canterbury Cathedral, England for further studies.

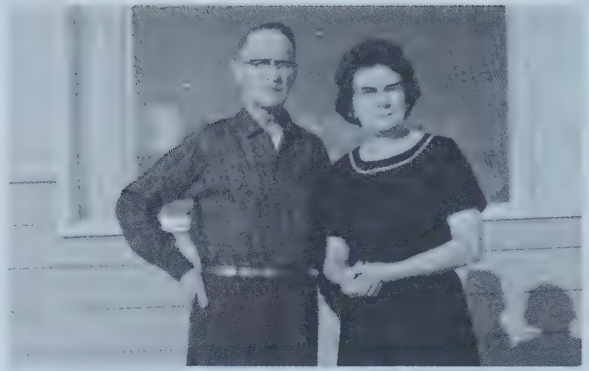


Rev. Turk McCallum and his wife came to us from Fort Smith in January 1964. He left for Lower Hay River in August 1970, and Rev. Wm. Jones replaced him in November 1970.

#### ROBERT F. COOK

Bob Cook was born in Marshalltown, Ohio in 1893. His parents were farmers. In 1900 they moved to a homestead in North Dakota but seven years later and after three crop failures and a severe outbreak of glanders in their horses they moved on to Minnesota for a year. Then they moved to Colfax, Saskatchewan to develop an estate of six sections of raw land, with hired steam outfits such as we see today in the South Peace Centennial Museum.

Bob worked with his father in Saskatchewan for a time, farmed for himself for three years, then spent six years as a salesman. In December, 1928 he came to Beaverlodge with Lloyd Harker and his wife, Gertie, Bob's sister. It was their intention to homestead but the trees they saw looked altogether too formidable to dry land, prairie farmers. In the spring when Bob was looking for work Ralph Campbell advised him to try the Experimental Farm, "where the pay is not much but there is a good bunch of fellows". Thus Bob approached W. D. Albright and was offered 30 cents per hour, which did not impress him greatly and he was given a hoe, which impressed him even less. Bob soon found, however, that the pay wasn't too bad as he had to work 10 hours a day, six days a week. Bob says he really enjoyed his work at the Experimental Farm and



Bob and Josie Cook say "Welcome to our House".



Dennis Cook, magician with assistant, Hanna Gustafson.



Dennis, Josie and Bob Cook shopping at Woolworth's store, Edmonton?

was loathe to retire in 1957 to Beaverlodge. Since then he has done a variety of jobs, mostly painting and he says he has painted Beaverlodge "every color but red!"

In 1931 Bob married Josie Oszust. Josie had taken a business course and for a time worked for Lyle's Ltd. One daughter, Lorraine married Fred Perdue, son of Percy Perdue of Halcourt and they have two children, Terri and Martin. Doreen May, age two and one-half years and Robert Cyril, age six years died in 1931 from meningitis. Dennis married Janet Goutet of High Prairie and they have two children, Shelley and Roberta. They live in Sexsmith and Dennis is representative of Lawson and Jones. Donna lives at Fort St. John, wife of Gordon Cleland and mother of Janet and Gordie. Donna is a Nursing Aide and Lorraine has worked in the office of a chartered accountant firm.

Beaverlodge remembers Dennis as a magician of note, assisted by Hanna Gustafson. His act "White Wings of Fantasy" won him the Bruce Arnett Trophy at a three-day convention of the International Brotherhood of Magicians in Great Falls, with 152 artists competing.

#### THE JACK COX FAMILY STORY

The Jack Cox family came to Beaverlodge in June of 1936, Jack having been transferred from Bluesky by the Atlas Elevator Company. With his wife Mickey and

daughters Joan, 3, and Anne Marie, 2, they found a little house three doors from the United Church. An immediate friend was made with Gina Harcourt on her way to church, as Anne fell into a ditch of water. Little Anne Marie passed away a few years after arriving in Beaverlodge.

John Wesley "Jack" was one of a large Ontario family of nine boys and two girls. He was born at Rockwood in 1893 to a Scottish mother and Irish father. He got his early education at Rockwood and Guelph. He joined the bank and was later transferred to Winnipeg. He later took up farming with his brother William at Landis, Saskatchewan and also worked for a grain company. In 1926 he was asked to take charge of an elevator at Whitelaw, the end of the steel. In 1931 he married Mary (Mickey) Emerson, a school teacher from Abernethy and they moved to Bluesky. After five years they were transferred to Beaverlodge. It wasn't long before Jack had his own business with the Ford and International Harvester dealerships. Later Lloyd Jewitt became his partner.

For 20 years Jack took an active part in all community activities. He served terms as Mayor and was on the executive of the Board of Trade, Masons, Elks and was a steward in the United Church. He served as a delegate to the County school council and ran as a Liberal Candidate in the Provincial election. In emergencies Doctor Young would call upon Jack for blood donations and was he jokingly kidded about the babies he helped to be born.

On retiring in 1956 the family moved to Osoyoos. In the two years he enjoyed there he made many friends and again took part in community affairs. He died suddenly in 1958 before a new home on the lake was completed. All those who knew him would feel his epitaph was very fitting, "To live in the hearts of those we love is not to die".

The family took their early education in Beaverlodge. Lillian Joan graduated with her B.Sc. in Nursing from U. of A. in 1956. She served as Public Health nurse in the Fairview district before marrying Robert Hollies of Pouce Coupe. Their family, Douglas and Janet now live in Pinawa, Manitoba.

Islay Jean took her later education at Alberta College in Edmonton and Mount Royal College in Calgary. As a secretary she worked in eastern Canada before taking off for the South Pacific. She spent six years in New Zealand, Australia and New Guinea before returning to Vancouver. At present she is sales secretary at Jasper Park Lodge.

Harold Emerson took his latter education in Oliver and U.B.C. He took two years off to make an "around the world" trip before completing his B.Ed. He married Audrie Pochinpinsky, also a teacher from Carrot River, Saskatchewan and at present they are both teaching in Terrace, B.C. where Harold is vice-principal of the secondary school. They have a daughter, Jody.

John Winston "Jack" also received his later education at Oliver and graduated from U.B.C. with his B.Sc. He entered the field of Data Processing and is currently working for B.C. Telephone in Vancouver. He married Caroline MacLean in 1971. Both boys have

always been very active in sports of all kinds. Jack was on the B.C. School Boys' team that won the Dominion Championship in curling in 1961.

Mary Lillian (Mickey) wife and mother has also been busy with family activities as well as her own. A highlight of 1972-73 was when she was chosen as a Grand Officer for B.C. in the Order of Eastern Star. Her busy life revolves around her children and grandchildren as well as the many young people who have made a home with her. Her home on Osoyoos Lake is open to all.

## THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

In the spring of 1944 Donald Cameron, now Senator Cameron, addressed a gathering in the Victory Hall. It was an era of reconstruction, bringing Canada back to normal after a decade of wartime destruction and the neglect of social needs. As Director of the University of Alberta Extension Department he was helping Alberta to take stock of its pitiful situation. He took stock of Beaverlodge and district. Yes, we did have the Victory Hall, but was it not outdated and altogether inadequate to serve the community?

He predicted that there would soon be felt a pressing need for better accommodation. Would we, perhaps, remodel the hall, bolster up the Canadian Legion quarters and maybe find a home for the Elks' Lodge? Would we have several smaller, self-owned buildings or would we pool our resources and come up with a facility which would meet the needs of all and be the backbone of the community? Having sown the seed, he pressed on to other matters, such as participation in his "School of Community Life" program.

There matters stood for a time. A meeting or two followed but the germ was weak. Finally Les Harris and Walter Bond, S. H. Andrews and Doug McFarlane went to Dawson Creek to inspect a 42 x 190 foot warehouse, one of many surplus from the United States Army Alaska Highway Construction, now on sale for \$1500 by War Assets Corporation.

Doug recalls sitting on the floor in the middle of that big empty warehouse and how the picture gradually took shape. 190 feet — an 80 foot dance hall, an 80 foot theatre and a 30 foot lobby between. The material was sound with well seasoned fir timbers suited to any type of construction. Their recommendation to purchase was turned down at the next general meeting; it just seemed too big a proposition. But Les and Walter were determined. They bought the building and made a final offer to the community to take over. Another general meeting was called. Enthusiasm built up and a decision was made to go ahead. Beaverlodge Community Centre was incorporated under the Corporation Act.

The village of Beaverlodge set aside approximately seven acres in the heart of the settlement for the use of the Community Centre. Les Harris headed up a volunteer group which went to Dawson Creek, dismantled the building and hauled the material to Beaverlodge. Scores of farmers hit for the bush to fell trees and saw more lumber. Professor A. R. Burgess of the University of Alberta was engaged as architect. Finally on a cold morning, about October 10, 1945, a gang of local volunteers manned a score of wheel



barrows to pour the cement and fired steel culverts to thaw the gravel as fast as Alex Ray's boys could drag it in. The temperature was below zero so the water had to be heated and the forms warmed night and day. The pouring continued for four days and involved all of 125 persons, including school boys.

Yes, tongues did wag and Rusty Olson, the foreman, got his Norwegian up. If the concrete froze before it set, it would wash away in the spring. Yes, it was a long winter for Rusty to defend his professional status as a concrete maker. But finally he won his point handily, when the Department of Education announced a change in school room specifications. If the Community Centre was to provide classroom to relieve the school crowding, and thus relieve some of its own financial stress, basement windows would have to be enlarged considerably. Now it was Rusty's turn. He searched for his critics, for surely they wouldn't find the concrete too tough. No one volunteered and his own crew enjoyed every slug at that rock-like, foot-thick cement.

The Beaverlodge Community Centre was officially opened May 14, 1946 with an open air dance at which Doug McFarlane's orchestra played. Some 1400 paid admission to that dance, only a fraction of these on the floor at one time. Everyone pointed with pride to its modern theater, spacious dance hall, coffee shop, lodge room, rifle range and various rooms used since by the I.O.D.E. Library, craft shops of varying design, school rooms, cadet quarters and anything else which has come to mind. Donald Cameron had envisaged a community centre which would dominate the town and serve the entire district. When it was opened it was declared the second best of its kind in the entire province, bettered only by the Cardston Community Centre. It was filmed by the National Film Board and the film shown all across Canada as an example of community enterprise.

Who owns the Community Centre? It is incorporated under the Co-op Act with shares at \$5.00 each, and some 197 voting shares were sold, one per person.

The drive to meet construction costs enjoyed terrific enthusiasm and raised about \$35,000 cash, loan capital bearing interest at 4%. Many citizens invested all they could spare, some \$100, some \$500, some \$1000 and the largest \$2500. The Legion and Elks each contributed \$3500 and the upper lodge room was designated for their use. In addition they received

some special privileges. The total cost was calculated at \$47,000 and the finished building was valued at \$175,000. It was a volunteer effort of some magnitude, considering the size of the village at that time — population was possibly 400.

## THE CRAFT CLUB

The Beaverlodge Craft Club was another "first" in the province. At a time when the Department of Extension was beginning to feel out the needs of communities, Beaverlodge found itself in the foreground of the fray. With a natural setting such as had been provided by the Community Centre board those interested in learning new skills and cultivating old ones felt an irresistible urge to take advantage of the spacious rooms. In 1952, 60 members showed so much interest that the Community Centre Board agreed to meet part of the cost of the \$1400 needed for equipment of looms, wood working tools, leather tools and a kiln. Instructors came to us from the Cultural Activities Branch of the Dept. of Extension.

For the first three years of the Craft Club's existence the Club and the Community Centre Board shared the responsibility of the Club's affairs but it soon became evident that the Club needed freedom to manage its own business. Mrs. Percy Stephens acted as the first president, Lloyd Jewitt as vice-president, Mrs. Jack Cox secretary and Mrs. A. C. Carder, treasurer. Since then the club has flourished. Wood working has been dropped but ceramics, weaving, sewing, cake decorating, knitting, flower making, basketry and courses in design have been taught. Each year members say what courses they'd like to learn and if instructors are available as many as possible are accommodated.

In 1956, two members, Mrs. George Martin and Mrs. E. McFaden took advanced courses in weaving and ceramics at the Banff School of Fine Arts. Since then others have also availed themselves of this opportunity.

Each spring a display of work, together with crafts brought from other lands is highlighted at the Band Concert evening.

The Craft Club has become a viable part of the community and the members are noted for their initiative and ability. Besides learning profitable and useful ways to fill their spare time the Club provides a friendly social centre.

## JOHN DITTER

John Ditter was born in Kevington, Saskatchewan, of parents of German descent. He served five years in World War II but a health condition kept him from going overseas.

John married Adeline (Addie) Patterson of Tisdale, Saskatchewan, of Irish background. There is one daughter, Loretta Wells of Calgary.

In 1943 John joined the Searle Grain Co. in Margo, Saskatchewan. In 1950, the Ditters lived at Taylor, B.C. where John drove a taxi for several years. Then in 1954 he returned to the grain business and as Addie says, "We lived in every point between Grande Prairie and Fort St. John except Hythe and Demmitt". Between times John found time to farm at Wembley.



The Beaverlodge Community Choir. Rev. Frank Chubb, conductor, 1948.

Beaverlodge friends will always recall the brave spirit with which Addie faced serious eye trouble and her valiant and successful recovery. Her pleasant manner always made paying "the gas bill" a pleasure. John was also very outgoing though he would scarcely admit it. He supported all community enterprises freely and in his off-hand manner handed out valuable farming advice.

John was the victim of a tragic farm accident in 1973. Then in 1974 Addie decided to leave Beaverlodge after 15 years, to live with her sister in Victoria. She has retained the farm and Beaverlodge is still "home".

#### ALAN B. ELLIOTT

Alan Elliott came from England as a young man and tried homesteading north of Athabasca but decided that was not for him. Thus he went with the N.A.R. as brakeman and his hair-raising experience of stopping a runaway freight train on the Smoky Hill indicates his devotion to duty. Soon he was put into office work and early in 1929 was sent to Beaverlodge to open the station there.

The station at that time was a section house with a lean-to at the back. It was built on stilts and in windy weather the draft would lift the tablecloth. In winter the routine was to go through the living room and the waiting room to the kitchen, lighting fires as you went. Alan was married to Jessie Wishart, daughter of Alex and Grace Wishart, Edson Trail comes to Grande Prairie over the winter trail of 1913, so perhaps Jessie "didn't mind the inconvenience."

In 1938 the Elliotts, Bruels and Monica McGinn took a holiday trip. Alan fitted up a homemade trailer, something new in those days and equipped it with a refrigerator and other refinements. They drove to Edmonton by way of Slave Lake and Athabasca and at Widewater ran into mud and a new road recently put up by a drag line. It took four days to go to Edmonton and four to return, and Alan broke two sets of springs in his new Model A roadster.

In Beaverlodge Alan worked steadily and stubbornly for civic improvement. He was in the team with Bill Adams, Sandy Andrews, Walter Bond and Doug McFarlane and others for such projects as the pioneer golf course, the school board and the curling rink. The first hospital was put together with volunteer labor but Alan used his N.A.R. pass to make repeated trips to Edmonton to convince the authorities that a hospital was a real need for the west country.

In 1939 the Elliotts moved to High Prairie and there Alan built his first sail boat. In 1942 he took over at Dawson Creek where the N.A.R. was up to its ears in Alaska Highway traffic. It was a nightmare and Alan was in bed only four hours a night for two years and during this time his staff increased from 12 to 85, all untrained.

The Elliotts retired to Moberly Lake in 1943 where Alan built his own cabin and another sail boat. He passed away suddenly in 1966 and Jessie returned to Grande Prairie.

There are four children. Marian married Colin Hacksworth of Prince George and they have one son, Colin. Doris married Brigadier General G.A.

MacKenzie of Halifax and their children are Barbara and Michael. Doris passed away in 1969. Brian married Mona Cox of Grande Prairie; they have two children, Bruce and Cathy. Alan James married Patricia Oliphant of Drumheller. Their children are Scott and Sandra.

Jessie had the unique experience of riding the first train into Grande Prairie and recently the last train. Her aunt, Mrs. Margaret Benson drove the last spike when the steel arrived in Grande Prairie in 1916.



1935—Alan Elliott, Monica McGinn, Jessie Elliott, Ruth and Harry Bruels.

#### THE BOB ELLIOTT STORY

The year was 1902, the place was Independence, N.W.T. (later named Busby, Alberta), the action was homesteading. To this scene came Nova Scotia born William Alexander Solin Elliott, his Swedish wife and their three sons, William (Bill), Charles and David. Leaving an arduous job in the copper mines of Butte, Montana, they travelled to their new home 30 miles northwest of Edmonton by horse-drawn covered wagon. It was a wet year and the wagon cut deeply into the prairie sod. To lighten the load the hand-carved bedroom furniture was placed on the train at Lethbridge and shipped to Edmonton. Train service was slow and the Elliott wagon got to Edmonton first.

Edmonton was an exciting town with a wide main street, a busy river and an old fort where the Elliott boys joined in games with other youths, many of them Indians. Shortages prevailed and the Elliotts refused an offer of a corner lot on Jasper Avenue and 101 St. in trade for their team of horses. When asked recently if he had any regrets on refusing to trade, W.A. replied, "It was a very good team of horses."

The first snows of 1902 found the Elliotts domiciled on their Busby homestead which now boasted a house, a log barn, three horses, two cows, two pigs, eight chickens and a hand-carved bedroom suite. A nearby farm was the "North West of 16" made famous by author J. G. McGregor.

In 1904 Percy Robert May, his artistic wife and children William, Emily and Robert left a country gentleman's life in England for a homestead neighboring the Elliotts. The trees were big, the soil was grey and the crops were poor. One fancy sugar bowl from a set of fine English china, a fork from a silver dinner service and other heirlooms are reminders of the many



family treasures sold through Edmonton shops to provide for the essentials of life on a depressed homestead.

Bill Elliott married Emily May in 1920 and raised a family of four. William John (Jack) was born in 1924, Charles Robert (Bob) in 1927, Florency Amy 1930, and Shirley Ellen 1939. All obtained their schooling at Busby where their father had the post office, trucking and oil agencies and subsequently was police magistrate of Westlock. Bob pursued a career in professional agriculture and joined the staff of the Dominion Experimental Farm at Beaverlodge in 1949 as a summer student. Upon graduation in 1952 he was assigned to the Beaverlodge Farm to conduct research with perennial grasses and legumes for hay, pasture, turf and seed.

In 1955 Bob married Beryl Eileen MacAulay, daughter of Albert and Beatrice MacAulay, formerly of Hythe. Beryl and her brother Brian were born at Consort, Alberta in a farming-ranching community but with persuasion from the prairie drought and William Aberhart freight assistance their family moved to Hythe in 1937.

Beryl taught school for the County of Grande Prairie at Sinclair Lake, Demmitt and Valhalla prior to her current position with the Beaverlodge Elementary School. In 1957 the Elliots continued their education — Beryl completing her Bachelor of Education in 1960 and Bob his Ph.D. in 1966. Their daughter, Marjorie Eileen was born in 1963.

Bob's interests in the community have included the Beaverlodge Band, Choral Group, Horticultural Society, Beaverlodge Community Centre, Library Board, Beaverlodge United Church and Masonic Lodge. In 1967 he was elected to the Beaverlodge Town Council and has served as Mayor since October, 1971.

## LESLIE EMES

The first store in the new town of Beaverlodge was started in the fall of 1928 by a pair of newlyweds, Olive and Leslie Emes. They had several tempting offers of location en route from Medicine Hat but when they saw the Beaverlodge Valley they looked no farther.

Les recalls their first encounter with the highway, or want of it, along Lesser Slave Lake in 1928. There was no road for a ways so they had to take to the ED &



Ted, Ken, Curtis, Leslie and Olive Emes.



The Les Emes family. (L) Courtice, Kenneth, Leslie, Olive, Ted (R), 1972.



Flt./Sgt. Leslie and Olive Emes, 1944.

BC tracks for a 10 mile stint. His bride insisted he was speeding but the speedometer registered only 3 mph! It was the ties which were rushing by!

Leslie Roland Emes was born at Kearney, Ontario, north of Orillia. His father, Thomas Roland Emes was of U.E. Loyalist stock, though originally English. His mother was English. Les recalls that one of his great, great uncles built David's Temple at Sharon, near Kingston, for a religious sect. Now it is a government museum. There was no steel or iron in its construction and the acoustics were excellent. The family history goes back to 1682, during the rule of James II.

The Emes family moved to Medicine Hat in 1913, to engage in contracting. Leslie became second miller in the Lake of the Woods mill when he left school but soon found the prospects of advancement slow as the head miller was in good health. Then he operated a lumber yard for the Revelstoke Sawmill Co. before leaving for Beaverlodge.

Leslie married Olive Hawthorne of Medicine Hat. Her father Archibald Courtice Hawthorne, was born at Peterborough, Ontario of English stock. He moved to Medicine Hat the year after the steel arrived there and worked for Cousin's store, which previously had brought in supplies by oxcart. He started a general store in 1896 and was in business until his death in 1935, except for a whirl at real estate in 1913-14. He served as Mayor for several terms.

Leslie opened a gents' furnishing store in Beaverlodge, the first business in the new town and Les and others struggled with the problems of new construction and newcomers wanting to settle. The Emes' home was a haven for the single people of the community and Olive's cooking was superb.

In World War II Les was in the RCAF for five years, his last posting being in charge of internal auditing, Calgary. Afterwards, he was in charge of the business office of the Experimental Station. On his retirement he served seven years as towerman for the Alberta Forestry Service. He is a staunch Anglican, an ardent philatelist and a passionate model railroader.

Olive and Leslie had four boys, one of which died in infancy. Kenneth married Hanna Peterson, R.N. and farms at Goodlow, B.C. Courtice married Fran Swaren of Forestburg and lives in Fort St. John. Edward (Ted) returned to Medicine Hat and married Valerie Hackett of England.

Olive Emes suffered ill health for many years but was always cheerful. A neighbor once commented, "Olive Emes is 90 percent heart". She was a gracious hostess and always had a high-piled Angel Food cake in the waiting.

She will be long remembered for her warm friendliness and generous hospitality. There was always someone whom she could help or bring cheer to, no matter how ailing her health might be. Her handwork was the work of an artist. Her daughters-in-law treasure her beautiful, perfect cutwork.

Olive's love for her grandchildren was another endearing quality. She was always able to talk to children, to entertain them and to do things for them. She was truly a wonderful, versatile person who enriched the community where she lived.

She died as the result of a tragic automobile accident in 1972 which left Leslie hospitalized for some time.

After World War II the Emes built a fine home adjacent to the Experimental Farm. After Olive's death, Les retired to the Senior Citizens' apartments in Beaverlodge and has done considerable travelling.

## EXPO RETOLD

Who won the Centennial Honors, Montreal or Beaverlodge? Locally we tell of Mayor Art Guitard's committee staging an all-day celebration: speeches, free hot dogs, the Old Timers' parade, all to the happy sound of the Beaverlodge band. And don't forget the Alberta Centennial Travelling Caravan, a walk-through, see-all, telling of life in Alberta since the inception of the Province in 1905. It was a gala attraction. Some 7,525 persons saw it all, the largest turn-out of any town in Alberta. The runner-up was Leduc, with



The Beaverlodge Tartanettes dancing at the Antigonish Highland Games, 1967 prior to their participation at Expo. (L) Linda Lay, Patricia Lay, Judy Clease, Rena Sherk, Sharon O'Dell, Ellen Haugseth, Laurie McLeod, Lenora Watson, Catherine Stacey, Gail McEachern. Ann Haugseth is not shown.



Centennial Day Celebration. Art Guitard, Mayor John Archer, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Carrell, , Ira McLaughlin MLA, and Jed Baldwin, MP.

7,050 persons, while Grande Prairie City mustered only 5,777 persons.

The parade was five blocks long. The Centennial King and Queen were our beloved Ruth and Ralph Carrell and they were driven in the Centennial Model T Touring Car, courtesy of the South Peace Centennial Museum.

A barbecue banquet was held in the evening, with some 1,000 persons attending. During the day 2,500 persons visited the South Peace Museum.

The celebration was staged by Beaverlodge and the surrounding district but the events of the day were only a small part of the committee's activities. Some 35 District Centennial Projects were undertaken, in places such as Wembley, Hythe, Hinton Trail, Rio Grande and Elmworth, not to mention two Beaverlodge Centennial Exchange students summering in Quebec. Obviously the South Peace Centennial Museum and the Beaverlodge Centennial Swimming Pool were cited as worthy enterprises com-



memorating the occasion and reflecting local initiative.

And of course we shared our fun with others for we sent Myra Haugseth and her 10 Beaverlodge Tartanettes, along with business manager Igmarr Haugseth and chaperones Betty Clease and Muriel McLeod, to entertain the Expo foot-sore at Montreal with their Scottish Country dances. For good measure they journeyed first to Antigonish, Nova Scotia, to tell those Scottish folk that they were not the only Scots in exile.

As though all this was not enough, Beaverlodge sent a contingent of high school students to Expo, with half a dozen oldsters to chaperone, or was it the other way around. All went well until the party reached Capreol where the train crew took a coffee stop. A nearby park, with benches and swings beckoned the oldsters, so off they went and a few minutes later gave a friendly wave to a moving train. Horrors! It was their own. Now the CNR rule book had the answer: a taxi ride to North Bay, a matter of a mere 80 miles and a stern warning not to repeat the escapade.

At Montreal's Expo an epidemic of tired and sore feet occurred, but nurse McFarlane had the cure: dangling feet in the birdbaths and fountain areas. Thus history was repeating itself, if memory is correct about the Vestal Virgins of Rome dangling their tired feet in the River Tiber. Ken Edgerton had a better idea, complete immersion, but when he approached the bath house he was confronted with strange writings on the wall, altogether beyond his comprehension. Being resourceful, he peeked over the screen, and quickly withdrew. Sensing a breach in moral conduct, he retreated to the other bathhouse but there, too, found long-haired types. Ken was to become aware of male vainglory.

Over at Pavillion 4 the afternoon performance of the Beaverlodge Tartanettes was lining up. The chorus line was calm but Myra Haugseth was refusing to open the show with her usual speech, this time in French. In the wings was a lawn chair, fully occupied and the incumbent fully relaxed with country-style straw hat shielding his face from the sun. To Cliff Stacey the hat spelled Beaverlodge but not Tartanettes. It could only be that of Charlie Morden, and it was.

### THE DONALD FARIS FAMILY

Donald Faris was born in Peking, China, the son of a missionary of the United Church and later a community development worker for the United Nations. Don's father grew up in the Scottish settlement of Bradford, Ontario near the Holland Marsh. He was somewhat of a rebel in the missionary circle of his time as he secured training in agriculture to aid him in his work abroad. In connection with his work with U.N. he wrote a book "To Plough With Hope", outlining a new approach for community development in the emerging countries.

Don's mother came from Nova Scotia of U.E.L. descent. She was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister and was closely related to founders of Dalhousie and Toronto Universities.

Don graduated from the University of British Columbia and went to West Africa to serve as an

agricultural research officer for the Nigerian government. Then he returned to California for four years to secure a Ph.D. In 1963 Don came to the Beaverlodge Research Station to head the Cereal Breeding Section, with special emphasis on barley. Since then the Faris family has spent a year at Cambridge, with Don on study leave and there they were happy to renew acquaintances from China, Nigeria and California.

On graduation from the University of British Columbia, Don married Dawn Cant of Vancouver. Dawn's mother was B.C.'s first instructor in physical training and had come to Vancouver from Scotland when quite young with her parents. Dawn's father was a teacher and later principal in several Vancouver schools. Dawn has her R.N. and B.S.N. and is on the staff of the Department of Mental Health Service in Grande Prairie. There are three boys, all in school — Kenneth, Murray, born in Nigeria and Peter, born in California.

Don and Dawn feel that Beaverlodge is a good place to raise a family. The educational and medical facilities are excellent and the environment healthy. The entire family serve in church and community activities and belong to the band.

### THE ESDALE GAUDIN STORY

Allen Esdale Gaudin, second son of Mr. and Mrs. D'Arcy Gaudin was born in Beaverlodge in 1938. He completed his schooling in Beaverlodge, graduating in 1956. After this, he joined his father, D'Arcy and his brother Jack in the store business.

On August 18, 1961, he married Merrilee M. Batter, oldest child of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Batter. Merrilee was born in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan in 1940. She attended school for four years in Piapot and then moved to Pincher Creek, Alberta with her parents. She attended school there for three years before coming to Beaverlodge where she entered grade 8. She was an active member in the C.G.I.T. groups in both Pincher Creek and Beaverlodge from 1952-1958. She graduated from the Beaverlodge high school in 1958 and entered the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. She returned to teach in the Beaverlodge elementary school, the Junior high school and finally the Beaverlodge high school where she is presently employed.

Esdale and Merrilee have two children, Allen Edward, born 1962, and Leigh Ann, born 1965.

Esdale was an active member in the Beaverlodge Army Cadet Corps from 1950 to 1959. He began as a private at the age of 12, and was promoted to the rank of Cadet Captain. During that time he attended summer cadet camp at Vernon, B.C. three times. In 1961 he was promoted to Second Lieutenant in the Cadet Services of Canada and served as instructor of the Beaverlodge Corps from 1959 to 1969.

He has been a member of the Beaverlodge Community Centre Board for the past six years. He has served on the Beaverlodge Town Council for the past nine years and is at present Deputy-Mayor of the town.

In 1958 he received his pilot's license at the Grande Prairie Airport and enjoys flying as a hobby.

At present Esdale is owner and manager of Tartan Ford Sales in Beaverlodge.

## JACK GAUDIN

Jack Gaudin was the eldest son of D'Arcy Gaudin and Betty Howe Gaudin, born and brought up in the town of Beaverlodge. He was one of the first boy scouts in the town and also one of the first cadets. As a youth he played hockey for the Hythe Mustangs and baseball for the Beaverlodge Royals.

He worked in his father's store both before and after his father's illness eventually taking over the business on his own. Jack joined the Fire Department in 1947 and is still a member. He married Betty Lorraine Walker, daughter of Russ and Agnes Walker. They have four children, all active in sports and 4-H work.

Betty is indispensable in the town being an excellent bookkeeper and helps needy folks with their income tax forms. She also is secretary-treasurer of the Anglican Church, an ardent curler and an effective 4-H director.

Betty and Jack live on the old "Rutabaga" Johnson farm. They have put a new house on the place and moved the original office building of the Experimental Farm to their property for a barn. They have a keen interest in horses, an interest shared with their family.

## GEORGE HALLATT

The Hallatt family were originally Norman French. The Anglicized spelling, according to George is an H, two A's, two L's and two T's.

George was born in the City of Leeds, Yorkshire, England of British parents but was raised in an orphanage run by the Congregational church. He left school in 1916 to become an apprenticed joiner and cabinet maker. His arrival in Canada found him doing farm work at Richlea, Saskatchewan. In 1929 he went to Totness, Saskatchewan on the Goose Lake Line and from there to Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge, where his first job was on the Babcock threshing outfit at Andy Laing's farm. He liked the Beaverlodge Valley and in 1930 filed on land at Hazelmere.

All this may seem prosaic but George is not that. Many will remember him for playing the Butlin accordion and the Viennese accordion in George Dunbeck's orchestra or at Talent Night in Beaverlodge. Or they might remember him for his duet with Tom Williams, "When Father Papered the Parlor." Then too, when Corny Toews needed a sign depicting the Wapiti river, George executed it, while others treasure his pen and ink etchings. He likes to think that his greatest entertainment effort was an imaginative treatise on life in the Beaverlodge Valley as seen by archeologists, delivered originally at a concert in the Appleton school. Most of the audience, if alert, were to find their names written in the rocks, even though thinly veiled.

Now George moves slowly. A trip down town takes two or three hours, with a chat here and there, a dissertation with someone further on. The bench at Gaudin's Store is a real hazard if Dave MacIntosh or other gentlemen of leisure are there sunning themselves. A stop there will undoubtedly bring George home late for lunch.

The archeological dissertation follows:

## AN HISTORIAN'S REVIEW OF THE DWELLERS IN THE PEACE RIVER COUNTRY, DURING THE BENNETT ERA, 1934 A.D.

BY PROFESSOR ELECTROPROTONICUS  
4000 A.D.

Great interest has been aroused by recent excavations that have taken place, at a spot known in the Bennett Era as the Red Willow district. Extensive operations, under the supervision of a noted Professor Cosmic-Ray, brought to light the fossilized remains of what is believed to have been a dwelling of a decadent inhabitant of this district. At a depth of sixty feet, the Robots, under the control of Master Mechanic Radio-Beam struck a substance similar to volcanic strata. This ultimately proved to be petrified remains of what at that period is believed to have been trees. This very primitive dwelling was evidently erected by placing cylindrical objects at right angles to each other in a horizontal position, forming a series of rectangles. These were placed one above the other, until sufficient height was reached to permit comfortable locomotion of the dweller. A rude covering was formed by smaller specimens, laid side by side, and alternately covered with perfect squares of Terra-Firma and Grassica-Sloughensis. Quoting Professor Grimmetticus as our authority, these people were Sun Worshipers. The reason given is that openings were found in the Bennetolithic dwelling, facing the rising of the Sun, which position was known to this ancient people as the East, quoting excerpts from papyrus and parchments unearthed in the old river bed of the Ancient Wapiti. According to theories formed from the deciphering of the Wapiti Documents, this eastern aperture was called a Door. Others on the southern side, were referred to as Windows. These served as a means not only of admitting the ultra-violet and infra-red rays, but also as a safe way of determining the approach of tax collectors, machine agents, bailiff and other natural enemies of the Bennetolithic Man. Upon the approach of one or more of these enemies, the inhabitants would retire into a subterranean depression, known in those times as the Cellar, until the danger was over, as they possessed very primitive means of defence, of which only one specimen is preserved today, consisting of a long, heavy, metal tube, attached to a peculiar shaped block of wood and projecting a small hard metal object, by means of certain chemicals compounded in unequal proportions, forming a substance known at that time as Gunpowder. It is believed that this punitive weapon, was used for the extermination of a species of animal, known then as the Moosii Barnurdicus.

### Part II

There is however another theory, propounded by Professor Clericas Harrisonii, who by the way, is noted for his scholastic endeavors in deciphering the strange hieroglyphics of the Bennett Era, that this ancient race was Moon Worshipers. From various prints, and other documents unearthed at what was the great educational centre of Appletonia, it is evident that this ancient race was in the habit of holding con-



vivial gatherings at the full of the Moon. At these gatherings, the ritual consisted of the whole company joining hands in a circle, then pairing off, and performing rapid revolutions, at the same time kicking the feet about in the most intricate movements, swaying their bodies in time to the measured beat of their crude musical instruments. We find further proof that after several of these Moon Dances, some of these performers became Moon Struck, so great was the enthusiasm to which they worked themselves. But according to Professor Harrisonii, this was chiefly confined to the younger members. The prints show that the singing of their native songs to the accompaniment of their favorite instrument, the Johanna, produced varied effects on the assembled members. Boredom, Mental Pain and a certain Do Get It Over Quick expression, is plainly evident on their faces. At the close of one of these songs the assembly shows great joy however, by striking the palms of the hands smartly together.

An interesting sidelight is the affection that these homesteaders had for the reigning monarch of the time. This is shown by an almost perfect specimen of a vehicle which was known at that time as the Bennett Buggy. The same affection however, was not discernable in the commercial centres of the Eastern Territory, for there the vehicles bore such strange names as "Rolls-Royce", "Cadillac" and "Packard".

### Part III

Passing over the above, we now give a summary of the pre-historic Bennettolithic dwelling. The various crude instruments and curiously fashioned metal receptacles found, proved to be, according to the Mortrudian Theory, articles used in the preparation of various kinds of foods. Domestic culture had not risen to a very high art at this time. The homesteaders food consisted mostly of solids. A round-shaped, flat object, mistaken for a wooden disc, proved to be a mixture of finely ground kernels of the wheat plant, of which a rare specimen is to be seen in the Botannical Temple in the City of Relativity. This modern metropolis is built on the site of the Ancient City of Grande Prairie. A curiously shaped object which attracted great interest, was a conglomerate mass of iron and steel, fashioned in an oblong shape, with a tubular projection in a vertical position, extending upwards through the overhead covering of the dwelling. After extensive experiments by Professor Mac-Allisonia of the Hellerian Institute, a theory was formed that this object was used by these primitive people, in the preparation of food, and also for heat during the colder season. Under the southern aperture was situated a flat rectangular object attached to the wall and supported by two frail uprights. Beside it stood a six-sided object, cubular in appearance and perfectly smooth, one side being covered with odd hieroglyphics which were O.K. A.P.P.L.E.S. These have not been deciphered yet. According to Professor Claysharpanicus this was used as a means of support when partaking of the solid foods placed on the rectangular object, which in turn supported various metal tools and containers used when eating. A curious object attracted the eye of one of our leading authorities on ancient foods, to wit, Professor

Winkitus. At first glance this was believed to be an instrument used in the shaping of their primitive weapons, known as an anvil. It was finally concluded this was a food known as bannock, to which the homesteader seemed very partial, as other substances found in various vessels served to show a considerable amount of the ingredients of this bannock was always kept on hand. Phosphates, alum, borax and finely ground kernels of the Wheat Plant, mixed together with  $H_2O$  which formed a sticky mass were the principal constituents. This, when exposed to an open flame in a metal container, gave a very good example of the culinary achievements of the Bennett Era. Professor Winkitus, who was persuaded to make a personal test of the edible qualities of this confection, is still suffering from distention of the stomach due to the emphyseal gases of the Phosphates. It is evident that this cataclyron of 1934 A.D. came with great suddenness as underneath this table was found the fossilized remains of the occupant of this dwelling. Deducting from portions still clinging to the figure, we find that these people wore various garments of odd shapes and colors. An object found underneath the Bennettolithic Man bearing the hieroglyphics G.W.G. caused great controversy at one of our leading educational centres. One scholar claiming it as the identification by which the man was known to his fellows, and others claiming it to be the trade-name of the maker of this garment. A small pouch crudely fashioned from the hide of some obscure animal and found near the figure, contained 3 flat metal discs each bearing the hieroglyphics O.N.E. C.E.N.T. These we believe, were used as a medium of exchange. However it has been concluded that these people of the Bennett Era were not very prosperous, as these metal discs have not been found in any great quantities. Professor Insolvent advances the theory that they provided some sort of amusement for the homesteaders, such as the ancient and honorable game of poker which still exists today among the lower intellectuals.

Another valuable discovery is a transparent object of great beauty and form, known even in this Era of 4000 A.D. as the "Bottle" or in the vulgar vernacular of that distant time as "The Jug". It was thought at first to be empty, but upon one of the research workers removing it from the grasp of the fossilized digits of the figure, one end struck sharply against the cooking-machine, spilling a modicum of the contents on the iron surface. So potent was this liquid that immediately a chemical reaction set in causing corrosion to a large extent. This liquid is thought to be partaken as a solvent for the bannock before mentioned, and according to the parchment found was known as Moonshine or Squirrel Whiskey. One of the Robots upon being given a small potion of this fluid, immediately performed the amazing feat of climbing to the fifteenth terrace of the Palace of Sport at Europa.

There seems no doubt that the Bennettolithic Man was little better than a slave performing all the menial tasks outside the dwellings and in some cases were forced to help clean the eating utensils by immersing them in water and then polishing them with a piece of fabric. In their own dwellings the females did all the

talking and gave the orders while the men listened. From records deciphered by Professor Watticus, we find this one-sided conversation has yielded no information of any importance. The men were allowed a certain freedom however, for on certain nights they were allowed to meet together and talk as much as they wished. On different nights these meetings had different names, some being U.F.A., Liberals, Conservatives, etc. and seemed to provide the men with much amusement for several days afterward. Professor Watticus explains that in deciphering this particular parchment he came across the words, "Hot Air and Politician" and to date has been unable to classify them. The men as a race were very easily controlled, but should one become unruly the female quickly brought him under control by striking him over the head several times with a cylindrical object with a handle at each end. In every dwelling that contained a female, one of these were found and all showed signs of use, for when the depressions on one of these objects were compared with the projections on the skull of a Bennetolithic man they were found to be identical.

#### Part IV

The Rupertian Institute of Political Research states that a depression swept the land during the Bennett Era. Professor Steele, founder of this Institute asserts this was due to "Sound Money, High Tariffs and Dumping Duties". It is also evident that a revolution was about to take place at this time due to the tyranny and bullheadedness of the reigning monarch, Bennett I. In the pocket of one of the garments on the homesteader was found a picture of a person with a hirsute growth and bearing the hieroglyphics — Woodsworth — C.C.F. This was believed to be the leader of the new Era that was about to dawn.

A further series of lectures will be given at the Hall of Atomic Research during the second audio stage of the third phase of Jupiter Plubius.

#### THE EARL HANKIN FAMILY

The Hankin family lived for some years in Beaverlodge. Earl's first work was to help move buildings from the old town on the hill to the present site of Beaverlodge. He worked for Gaudins and Col. Lyle for a while and eventually took over the Case Machinery Agency but was forced out of business when the Depression hit. By this time he longed for peace and serenity so with his family he moved to Clarkson Valley and homesteaded for nine years.

In later years the Hankins moved to Grande Prairie where Earl became a salesman for Scott Fruit Wholesale Company. He and his wife now reside quietly in Grande Prairie.

Rio Grande residents will recall that Earl is the brother of Mrs. Griff Carter. Earl devotes his time to his hobby of writing poetry for which he is talented. Perhaps his poetic account of the Rio Grande settlement does not rate as his best, yet it tells a story familiar to many.

There's a story I'd like you all to hear  
Of a brave and hearty band  
So I'll tell you of the pioneers

That settled Rio Grande.  
They came from lands far, far away  
They came from far and near  
And some were left along the way  
With broken hearts and tears.  
Some came in ox drawn caravans  
And some came in alone  
But they all were looking for a land  
Where they could build their homes.  
They came in o'er the Edson Trail  
With many breaks and spills  
They never faltered, never failed  
When they climbed the break-neck hills.  
Ever onward, all undaunted  
Went this brave and hardy band  
'Til they found the place they wanted  
There they settled on the land.  
From the early dawn 'til dark at night  
They brushed and cleared their land  
They built a little village  
And they called it Rio Grande.  
With their horses and their oxen  
They cleared and broke the sod  
And all they had to go on  
Was their faith and trust in God.  
As memory travels back again  
I remember very well  
When they built the church at Rio Grande  
To save their souls from hell.  
In autumn when the harvest came  
The neighbors all pitched in  
To help each other thresh their grain  
And store it in the bin.  
Then when the winter came to stay  
And the snow had settled down  
They hitched their horses to their sleighs  
And hauled their wheat to town.  
Then on the long cold winter nights  
The sky was cold and grey  
Their whist drives and their dances  
Helped to pass the time away.  
The Cages and the Carters  
They were settled here to stay  
Then there was old Nels Carlson  
With his tales of old Norway.  
The Morrisons, the Libertys  
The O'Connells and the Cooks  
If I could think of half the names  
It would fill a fair-sized book.  
They can look back down at Rio Grande  
And the country that they loved.  
But without those brave old pioneers  
It will never be the same.

#### BILL HARCOURT

Bill Harcourt was well known in Beaverlodge, working as an elevator agent, operating an implement and trucking business and handling a bulk fuel agency. Besides these, he served as mayor for a term.

For several years he and Tony McGee were in partnership, with three Cats building roads at Rainbow Lake, Fort Nelson, Hines Creek and Clear Hills to aid seismograph crews and oil drilling. Tony kept the machines in repair and Bill was the manager. Jim and



Bob McLaughlin, Ernie and Earl Sanderson and Cliff Nichol worked with them.

In 1939 Bill married Georgina Cawston and they had a happy life together until Gina's death in 1966. Bill went on a trip to Toronto in 1967 and died suddenly on Christmas Eve — a severe shock to his many friends.

Gina and Bill were warm, outgoing, happy people, friends of the town and its people. Bill was always kindly and considerate to Gina's children, Lois and Barry.

### **JAMES BAIRD HARCOURT**

Jim Harcourt was born at Woodrow, Saskatchewan, November 6, 1913, the fourth son of William V. Harcourt, once a foreman on the Beaverlodge Experimental Substation. Jim attended public school at Winnifred, Saskatchewan and high school at Woodrow and Lafleche, Saskatchewan. Proceeding to the Peace, he was employed on the Experimental Substation in Beaverlodge, where he was efficient and popular. Jim played basketball with the Experimental Farm Team.

During the summer of 1939 he was engaged at Kinuseo Falls with the Monkman Pass Transport Co. For several years thereafter he was employed at trucking for Imperial Oil Co. in Beaverlodge. Jim, always active in sport, played center for the Beaverlodge Blue Bombers hockey team.

In the fall of 1940 he was appointed Grain Buyer at Hythe, Alberta for the Alberta Pacific Grain Co. While still in Hythe, on February 28, 1942 he married Isobel Dewar, daughter of John and Isabella Dewar of Beaverlodge, Edson Trail pioneers. In June that same year Jim was called for military service, joining the 31st Alberta Reconnaissance Unit and proceeding overseas in October 1943. He saw active service in Europe as a tank driver with the Essex Scottish Regiment under Major Tilson, a former neighbour in Saskatchewan.

When the war was over Jim received his discharge and returned to grain buying at Beaverlodge. Jim and Isobel were blessed with four children, Maureen (Mrs. R. Wade) Edmonton, Margaret (Mrs. T. Nesbitt, London, England), William Ross of Dawson Creek, B.C. and James Jr., still attending high school at home in Beaverlodge.

Unfortunately, to the deep grief of his family and friends to whom he was known as "Buck" Jim died suddenly April 25, 1962, age 49.

### **THE PETER HARRIS STORY**

Peter Gambell Harris, eldest of 5 children of William Peter Harris of London, England was the last of the family to arrive in Canada. Leslie, Rudolph and Humphrey and sister Marjorie (Mrs. Alex Watt) had come to Canada before the outbreak of World War II.

When travel restrictions eased in late 1947, Peter made plans to leave England. He, his wife Thirza and children Patricia and Trevor arrived in Canada in mid January of 1948 and stayed with brothers Leslie and Rudolph for the balance of that winter. Expected work at the Beaverlodge Community Centre did not materialize and so with the help of his brothers Peter joined the ranks of the farming community, settling on

the "Stubbs" place northwest of Beaverlodge. Here they remained until 1959.

During these years Peter and Thirza founded the "Community Players" a drama group that presented one or two theatrical performances a year on the stage of the Community Centre. In 1956 he established the weekly newspaper "The Advertiser" which was later taken over by Trevor.

In 1959 Peter decided to enter the ministry, hence left the farm and the newspaper and went off to University in London, Ontario. In 1961 he was ordained as a minister of the Anglican Church in services held in Peace River, conducted by Bishop Reginald Pierce.

From 1961 to 1965 he served the community of Fort McMurray, where he played a major role for the Chamber of Commerce in the promoting of the Athabasca Tar Sands project. He left Fort McMurray in 1965 for a parish at Cobble Hill on Vancouver Island and died there in 1968.

His wife Thirza stayed on in Victoria until the spring of 1973 then travelled east to live near her daughter in Quebec City.

### **THE FRANK HELZEL STORY**

Frank and Adele and son Max arrived at Tupper Creek, B.C. in February 1949, emigrating from Czechoslovakia.

After living in the Sudeten settlement in B.C. for two years, they moved to Beaverlodge in 1951 together with Adele's mother. They rented a building from John Oszust, situated next to the pool hall and Frank opened a shoe-repair shop where he worked in the evenings, while by day he worked on the sewer-line which was being installed in the town.

Adele worked by day for various people, doing housework. Max, now in his second grade attended school in the basement of the old United Church.

Adele's mother passed away in November 1951. Frank and Adele then purchased the building on 2nd Ave. where they still reside. They made numerous repairs and improvements, converting it into a comfortable dwelling with the shoe sales and repair shop in the front portion where Frank carried on his trade till ill-health forced him to retire.

Adele worked at the hospital as a ward aide for many years. Her many patients will recall her pleasant smile and sunny disposition.

Max commenced skating at the age of five, excelled



Frank, Adele and Max Helzel.

in many sports, and as he grew older, played with the Hythe Mustangs. On completing his grade 12 he played for a season with the Junior Red Wings in Weyburn, Sask.

He moved to Quesnel, B.C. in 1964, where he worked for the Department of Highways. He played hockey for the Kangaroo hockey club. He is now town works superintendent and is married, with two children and still very active with the Quesnel hockey club.

#### ARNOLD HENNIG

Arnold Hennig was born at Stony Plain in 1923. His grandfather was a tailor in Austria and his father came to Canada in 1905 to farm. Arnold holds a B.Sc. (Agriculture) and was employed by the Alberta Research Council for three years with the soil survey party which mapped the Valleyview-Grande Prairie district. This sold him on the Peace so he transferred to the Beaverlodge Research Station.

In 1951, Arnold married Helen Bergmann of Edmonton, a recent RN graduate. She is of English descent and her parents farmed at Legal before moving to Edmonton where her father was employed in the advertising department of the Edmonton Journal.

There are three daughters. Darlene is a dental hygienist, Donna is currently in charge of an office section of the Gulf Oil Co. in Calgary and is working on a University program. Laura is in school and is torn between many interests: art, writing and horses.

Helen was one of the first lifeguards of the Centennial swimming pool and is a leading proponent of Beaverlodge's fine library. Arnold has served on boards of Legion, Community Centre, skating rink and curling rink, and five years on the Town Council.

When Helen was Regent of the Beaverlodge I.O.D.E. she and Arnold received a command invitation to attend a garden party on Edmonton's Parliamentary lawn honoring Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. All went well until Arnold and the Prince got into a little chit-chat at the time when the Royal Couple was scheduled to move on. At first the men did not see the frantic signals from the organizers of the day and some even thought that the Queen herself would have to intervene!

#### COL. WILLIAM ANDREW HOGG — by Doug McFarlane and Mary Wallan

The Col. arrived in Grande Prairie in the fall of 1921. Mrs. Hogg and the five younger children joined him in the spring of 1922. They spent the first winter in the Hythe district, then in the Gimle School district until 1929. His second homestead was in the Goodfare district on Steep Rock creek. His first homestead was another story, taken in 1906 near Delburne, east of Red Deer following his father and four brothers who had settled there. An interesting note is that one brother, Ed was for years the popular mayor of Red Deer. Now the Col. Hogg family were again pioneering with small children 30 miles from railroad or doctor, in what the Col. always referred to as "The Beautiful Peace River."

The Col. was always ready to help in any emergency and the Stork usually found Mrs. Hogg in charge

when he arrived. She always said how nice it was to have Dr. Nixon in Beaverlodge after having to contact Dr. Carlisle of Lake Saskatoon or Dr. O'Brien in Grande Prairie. She was one of the founders of the Gimle Ladies' Aid.

The three older sons arrived later taking up homesteads. Maurice (Jim) had four years overseas in World War II. He is now retired in Summerland, B.C. Bernard (Barney) lives at Arras, B.C. and is still interested in horses. Both boys used to ride in the Calgary Stampede. Richard (Dick) is retired in Longview after working for an oil company since 1929. Olive (Mrs. Ed. Kent) is retired in Summerland, B.C. Solomon (Ed) was dairymen for Beaverlodge until he and his family moved to Kinsella district. Harry, the youngest son and family live in Spirit River. Mary (Mrs. Wallan) still calls Beaverlodge her home. Col. and Mrs. Hogg had 35 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren when the Col. died in 1949 at the age of 79. Mrs. Mary Hogg lived to see her 86th birthday. They were buried in the family plot in the Gimle Cemetery where their daughter Annie, age 12 was buried in 1925 and son Osborne, the fourth oldest, age 61 was buried in 1970. Osborne and family returned to retire in Beaverlodge after some years spent in Turner Valley.



Col. Hogg (77), Mrs. Hogg (68), daughter Olive Kent, grandson Arthur Kent, great-grandchildren Ronald and Sharon Kent.





Col. and Mrs. Hogg and 3 of their children, May, 1911.

The Col. had an open mind to church and creed. He considered all men born equal. He was concerned about the world he lived in and said many times that his and the coming generation were taking all from the good earth and returning nothing to fill the void. His prophesy is being confirmed in the 70's. During both world wars he gave his time and energy to many patriotic causes. He was a man of many talents. Auctioneering was his vocation but he could call dances or, hogs equally well, and he surely could sing. When Gimle community surprised them on their 25th wedding anniversary the Col. did most of the entertaining. When the Col. and Silvertip Campbell got together they could tell stories that made an evening go faster than any comedy seen on T.V.

He had various clerks for his sales over the years including Dave Mackintosh, Ralph Carrell, Lenabelle Moore, now Mrs. Johnny Johnson but Doug McFarlane was with him the longest in his later years and he has now added his recollections, stories mostly true as recalled from lively conversations over many a mile with buggy or cutter behind his famous team "Zacharia and Cattawampus."

The Col. had sold pianos in Ontario, farm implements in the Dakotas, preached the gospel in Green Bay, Wisconsin to tide him over one tough winter and in 1906 his restless wanderings led him to the ranching country of southern Alberta where foreign capital in the shape of the remittance man was the basis of prosperity and it was there he found his true vocation of rural auctioneer. The Col. vouched for his participation in these yarns of the old west and one confirmed from another source concerned the death of a lady of doubtful virtue in Lloydminster. When no member of

the cloth would bury her, a group of her admirers hired the largest hall in town and to a capacity crowd Col. Hogg preached a sermon on charity and love towards our fellow men and women that went down in history. Then there was the sale of a ranch in the south to a remittance man with no limit to his gullibility. First the ranch was sold, followed by the stock, the buildings, the fences and in a final brilliant stroke, the water rights to the creek. Another remittance man supposedly owner of a prosperous ranch paid for by his family, was faced with a visit by his older brother from England. The boys got together. A legitimate rancher agreed to take a holiday. The brother arrived, was duly entertained, impressed and left a large cheque to buy more pedigree stock.

There was the long drive on a bitterly cold winter day during the war with the Col. carrying his carefully hoarded monthly 13 oz. ration of wartime scotch, only to find on arrival a mass of frozen crystals. His opinion then expressed of the crooked bootlegging government that diluted his whiskey, was a masterpiece. We live by comparison. Col. Hogg claimed he owed his title to a fellow auctioneer who rated a captaincy. Major Hogg would have been better but why split hairs? One of his favorite sayings was, "He that bloweth not his own horn, the same shall not be blown." Another, "Show me a man who never made a mistake and I'll show you a man who never did anything."

If you were an auction buff in late depression days you knew the Col. You probably came for the entertainment and went home with a worn out saw. He always had a quick answer. When selling a hog trough, it made him homesick. Selling harness a chap acting smart walked up to the Col. and hung a horse collar over his head, saying "doesn't look bad on a Hogg." The Col. finished selling the item, walked over, hung it



on the chap's head with the remark that it looked better on a jackass. He never lied, merely conjured his words and the public. "I have here a cast iron frying pan. Will last a lifetime, my wife has worn out two." Or on selling a beat up piano, "Now I'll tell you the qualities of a good piano, starting with the legs, the body, the keys and in a reverent tone, the movement by Nichol, Wessel and Gross and the sounding board. I never did find out if there was such a movement." Then without a pause. "What am I offered for this piano." The picture had been painted. On selling an average old hand saw. "Henry Disston sure makes good saws. How much am I offered?"

He was scrupulously honest in his dealings with the public but fully subscribed to the auctioneers creed of "Caveat Emptor". As he said, he was hired to get the best possible price for the goods at auction. This sometimes led to the use of a few tricks of the trade. It was hard to identify bids in a closely packed rural crowd and experience taught me to be wide awake when the Col. drew the crowd tightly around him. I well recall such an occasion and a pump engine sold for top price. Later that evening I asked the Col. who had bid on that engine. "Just the two brothers and I," he said. "But don't ever tell that as long as I am living." The brothers farmed in partnership.

The Col. was a natural born salesman of the old Medicine Man school. Today with his ability and uncanny knowledge of human motivation he might have been general manager of a larger corporation or a psychiatrist but his rural environment shaped his course. He didn't know the meaning of work as such. To him life was a game and in his own good time he accomplished far more than the average plodding worker and had fun doing it. He gave full credit for his successes to his wonderful wife, Mary who shared the good and the bad and many can vouch that she was a wonderful cook.

He was an ardent conservationist although his love of the wild was sorely tried on one occasion when a pet deer stepped right through the kitchen window to join the family at supper. All the family seem to have inherited some of his sense of humor and capability. Son Dick was making slow progress moving a manure pile for R. C. Lossing "Terrible" he said "the fork handle tickles my hand and I break out laughing." Son Barney had several fortes as befits any cowboy or horse trader. For a while his tannery on the Beaverlodge river flourished under the guise of "Hogg Leather."

Towards the last when Col. Hogg was in Beaverlodge Hospital charted dangerously low, the day nurse coming on duty closed the window with the remark "Brr, it's cold." The pulse was almost non-existent but the spirit was normal. "Get right in here girly, we'll soon fix that."

## HELGE HOLMBERG

Helge Holmberg was born in Torps County, Medelpo, Sweden, June 26, 1908. His father was among other trades farmer and Helge stayed home, attended school and helped on the farm till the age of 16.

One of 12 children, he, early in life had to contribute

to the upkeep of the home by working in logging camps, brick yards and on farms.

He came to Canada in 1928 to visit a brother, Ed in Spirit River who taught him the carpenter trade. Helge liked it so well he stayed. As a sideline he homesteaded in the White Mountain area 1930.

In 1936 he married Mandy Miskulin. They had two children. Allan, born 1939 and Elois 1941.

Always a lover of music Helge played in a dance orchestra and the band.

He was employed by the school division as carpenter, foreman for four years previous to moving to Beaverlodge in 1947. There he continued in his trade of house builder. He joined the Beaverlodge brass band and the Doug McFarlane dance orchestra and later formed his own orchestra.

He was the Exalted Ruler B.P.O. Elks lodge in 1955. He attended the Bentum United Church and sang in the choir. He was senior carpenter at the U.S.A. Radar Station on Saskatoon Mountain for a year prior to the family moving to Victoria in 1956.

In Victoria Helge continues to do carpenter work and Mandy is cooking in a restaurant. Both intend to retire shortly. Allan is working for C.B.C. Television in Winnipeg and Elois is enroute to Germany where her husband is stationed with the Canadian Armed Forces.

## THE HOSPITAL STORY

On June 18, 1928 the Hospital Board for the Grande Prairie area pledged itself to the construction of hospitals in the outlying portion of the Hospital District as soon as finances permitted. The pledge was taken to gain votes in the west end for a plebiscite that would provide the tax money for a new hospital in Grande Prairie. The plebiscite required a two-thirds majority vote for passing. Old timers remember rumors of irregularities and one of the ballot boxes disappearing.

Grande Prairie built their hospital, and the residents to the west settled down to await construction of facilities for them as soon as funds were available. Eight years later, however, Grande Prairie was planning a nursing home. A delegation from Beaverlodge, composed of Mrs. A. G. Little, W. D. Albright, G. K. Slaney, W. Adams, and A. B. Elliott reminded the board of their promise to assist them.

In response, the Grande Prairie Hospital Board converted a cottage in the Old Town into a maternity home in 1936. It boasted three beds, with a nurse and helper. Dr. James Nixon was the capable local physician. Dr. Nixon had followed Dr. McLean, whose love for playing bridge was best exemplified by his 8 no-trump bid! Before Dr. McLean, Dr. Carlisle made visits to Beaverlodge from Wembley and his office was located on the site of the Bentum Hall.

The ratepayers who referred to themselves as the West End District Hospital Association were not satisfied with the maternity home and in August of 1937, they proceeded to construct a new 10-bed hospital. Funds were raised initially by a giant auction sale of donated goods, ranging from seed grain, horses, pigs to preserves. Labour was donated and though money was always short, the project proceeded





The Original Beaverlodge Hospital.



Beaverlodge Hospital addition.

on until 1939. Dr. Nixon had left, and to induce a successor, office space was donated in the upstairs of the new hospital and a new car was provided free. This offer attracted Dr. W. A. Young in May of 1942, and this was probably the best investment that the community ever made.

In June of 1942, the Grande Prairie Hospital Board took over the operation of the new hospital and in June, 1943 reported that the operation was a failure and recommended that the hospital be closed. What a black day this was for so many who had worked so hard. Frank White of Halcourt is said to have become so incensed about it all that he threw his latest Grande Prairie purchase, a pound of tea, out of the window! There followed a very trying period; trying to get staff, trying to get support from Grande Prairie, trying to get help from the community and trying to get help from the Provincial Government. In November a movement began to establish a new Beaverlodge Municipal Hospital District which would permit money raising by the issue of debentures. A provisional board was appointed, composed of E. P. Davis, Mel Byers, Les Harris, Dan O'Connell and Basil Hill. Finally, on March 16, 1944 the first regular meeting of the permanent Hospital Board was held. The three members present were Les Harris, Mel Byers and Harold Jarvis. Mrs. Anne Duffield was appointed secretary-treasurer. The first business consisted of floating a \$20,000.00 debenture to pay off capital debts and purchase more equipment.

Once established with the control of their own destiny the Board had reasonably easy sailing. In 1956 a new 20-bed hospital was constructed, to meet the needs of the growing community. The hospital that the people had built themselves was converted into a staff



The first Beaverlodge hospital.

residence and serves that purpose to this day. In 1967, an addition was added to the hospital, which increased its rating to 30 beds and 9 bassinets with a modern laundry and mechanical system. Dr. Cy Young served the community from 1942 until his early passing in 1967. He always loved a story, such as the one on Dr. McMurray, the local dentist. A local lady, whom he had examined earlier that day, returned to his office searching for her undergarments. After a brief search, they were found. The woman exclaimed, "Thank Goodness! I was afraid maybe they were in Dr. McMurray's office!"

In 1967 Beaverlodge and Hythe joined to form the Beaverlodge-Hythe General Hospital District No. 32. This move linked the destiny of health facilities in both communities. This move also allows them a greater degree of control over their operations, which was the secret of the success of the Beaverlodge Hospital District.

Problems? Remember Dr. James Wong, able and alert. His medical knowledge was carried in a frame about 4'10", weight 120 pounds. Food was a necessity, not a luxury.

Torval Teigen was a lumberjack Norwegian, hard of muscle and although now retired, had kept his homestead appetite. In hospital Dr. Wong's orders were 1500 calories; all his patients must reduce. But Torval moaned, "He ain't going to make a small Chinaman out of me."

#### BEAVERLODGE HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

The organizational meeting of the Beaverlodge Hospital Auxiliary was held in the Legion Hall in 1942. Lenabelle Moore chaired the meeting at which the following were elected: president — Mrs. Hazel Young, secretary — Mrs. Olive Jarvis and treasurer — Mrs. Nora Wheeler.

The group undertook to do hospital mending and sewing and to raise money for furnishings for the Nurses' home. A chesterfield suite and linen were among the purchases. The money was from bake sales mostly, though there was war-time rationing of supplies. A cedar chest filled for a bride-to-be was raffled; a veteran homestead bachelor won it.

Other members were Mesdames Hamel, Nellie Lee, Phyllis Andrews, Mary Watt, Margaret Harris,



Mae Hill, Lena Lowe, Flo Byers, Ida Olson, Mayme Hill, Pauline MacDonald and many others.

By 1949 it seemed that there was no further need for these services and the auxiliary was disbanded.

### THE HUME STORY

Duncan Hume was raised in Arkell, Ontario and as a young man wended his way across Canada to Vancouver. There he met Jennie Riddler who was just out from Dunfermline, Scotland. Two years later they were married and for several years they lived in Vancouver. Dunc drove a delivery truck and made many trips over the Caribou Trail to 100 Mile House. In 1918 Dunc and Jennie and their five children came to Grande Prairie. Dunc spent his first year driving Dr. O'Brien who was ministering to people sick and dying with influenza.

Then they moved to their homestead just north of Huallen where Dunc built a 12' x 18' house. This land was later sold to Gordon Cameron but in recent years has been bought back into the family. It now belongs to Flora and John Foster. The children walked 3¼ miles to the Lower Beaverlodge school. Soon after they arrived the Humes bought a cow and a little pig. Their neighbor, Mrs. Thoreson gave them a hen and a setting of eggs; thus their little farm began. Jennie and her daughters raised a big garden and picked all the wild berries they could find and preserved them. She also made butter in the summer and stored it in stone crocks. Eggs were stored in water glass and many different kinds of meat were canned. During the winter Dunc sawed and sold wood to earn a little extra money while Jennie cooked and baked for bachelors during the harvest season to help out. Jennie was a good seamstress and knitter so she was always able to provide well for her family.

After seven hard but happy years they moved from the homestead to the old town of Beaverlodge. Dunc and Albert Anderson went into the garage business while Jennie took over the boarding house at the Experimental Farm. The garage was located just across the road from where John Wallace now lives. In 1929 the business was moved to the new Beaverlodge townsite. In 1948 this garage burned down but was rebuilt and operated for several years by Dunc and his son Cameron. The building is now owned by Davis and Olsenberg.

Dunc was a good athlete and in later years an enthusiastic sports fan — especially in baseball. In 1908 he played on a championship baseball team in Arkell, Ontario. The team was composed chiefly of the Hume family. Sons Cameron and Bob carried on the tradition and played both baseball and hockey in Beaverlodge.

Jennie died in 1953 after a long illness. Dunc was remarried in 1955 to Haidee Adams and they spent seven happy years together. He died in February 1962 and Haidee in October of the same year. Some people would say that Duncan was not successful as a businessman but he and Jennie had something many of us have missed and that is that they were content with what they had. They were very happy and had a real gift for helping and encouraging others.

Their oldest daughter Anne married Dave Ross and lives in Edmonton. Bertha is Mrs. Ben Chapman of

Amisk, Alberta. Flora married John Foster and is the only one of the family still living in the area. Cameron married Donald Keopke of Sexsmith and lives in Vancouver. His wife passed away in February 1973. Robert married Margaret McDonald of Beaverlodge and they live in Osyoos.

### RUDOLPH AND ANN JACOBS

After completing his training in trade school, the desire to explore the world overcame Rudy Jacobs and in April of 1929 he bade his family farewell, left his home town in the Saar Valley of Western Germany and set out by steamship for Canada, the land of opportunity. Arriving in Halifax and not realizing the vastness of the land, he purchased a railway ticket to the end of the line. When he finally arrived at Sexsmith he decided he had gone far enough and disembarked. He was unable to speak a word of English but immediately found work clearing land for a Mr. Moodie, a cattle buyer who greeted newcomers at the station with a handshake. Rudy later learned that this initial handshake was to determine if the man had a good grip — if so, he was hired. The wage — \$1.00 per day plus board.

It was through this same Mr. Moodie that he later met Frank Kinderwater whose pretty daughter Ann immediately caught his eye. Being a man of great determination, Rudy quickly tied the knot and the happy young couple set up housekeeping at Rio Grande where Rudy had already established himself as the local blacksmith. Because of his trade school training he was able to repair just about everything and was never at a loss for work. He also purchased a truck with which he hauled grain for the local farmers.

Rudy was an accomplished organist and pianist. In fact, the first day he arrived in Rio Grande he was asked to play the Requiem Mass for a Mr. Buckley whom he had never met.

In 1935 he received return fare from the Hitler Regime in order for him to return to vote in the Saar Valley plebiscite to determine whether the Saar Valley would go with France or Germany. He refused! During the war years Rudy trucked on the Alaska Highway. The fact that he, as a German during the war was able to be employed in this lucrative job was due to references from Bat Scully, J.P. at Rio Grande and Doug McFarlane, Beaverlodge town secretary. When this job was completed, Rudy and family moved to 'the Simms Place' at Rio Grande and commenced farming. Later they moved to Beaverlodge where he entered the lumber business, went catskinning, operated a motel and service station and also worked as an inspector with the CNT. In the interim he established a coin laundromat, two apartment buildings and numerous holdings about town — which is not bad considering that 40 years before he was a stranger in a strange land.

Ann comes from pioneering stock as well. Her parents, the Frank Kinderwaters arrived in the La Glace area from the States in 1912 over the Edson Trail.

Rudy and Ann have seven children: Francis, the eldest is married to Elizabeth Morgan, an English schoolteacher. They have a daughter, Jill and own the



Laundromat in Beaverlodge. Phyllis, a teacher, is married to Lyall Smith, son of the Howard Smiths of Hythe. They are in Jakarta, Indonesia where Lyall is employed as an engineer. They have three children, Betty Wyn, Todd and Jane. Clem is married to Pat Thoreson, and they and their son Dean reside at Huallen where they have a dairy farm. Bob and his wife, Ann Voth and daughter Melissa reside in Edmonton where Bob is employed as an electrician. Carol and son Cory live in Grande Prairie where Carol is matron at Hillside House. Carol is a psychiatric nurse. Mike is employed with Proctor and Gamble and is still single. The youngest son, Jim is still at home completing his education.

Rudy and Ann are now retired and living in Beaverlodge where Rudy still maintains his interest in the Monkman Pass where in 1937-1939 he established a 7-cabin resort with 7 boats and helped the Monkman Pass Association in its attempt to build a road to Prince George. He is also the inventor of the Roto-Swings, seen in playgrounds across Alberta. We, the children of Rudy and Ann, give thanks for instilling in us a strong will to succeed, pride in our heritage, and a great interest in the world around us.

The Coin Wash, which Rudy established was indeed an asset to the town. It has enhanced the standard of living of many, including the family which put it to its ultimate test, using the hot water and the agitators to loosen and pluck the feathers from a number of chickens. Strangely, it worked but when Rudy came along the place was in shambles and the filters clogged.

Eventually order was restored and Proprietor Jacobs lit up a fresh cigar!

### THE HAROLD JARVIS FAMILY STORY

Harold Jarvis was born in Bashaw, Alberta. His father, Emberson Jarvis and mother, Elizabeth were born in Wiarton, Ontario. Later they met and were married in Bashaw where they farmed.

Olive Wishart was born in Dauphin, Manitoba. Her mother, Catherine Wilson was born in Ripley, Ontario and her father, Daniel Black Wishart was born in the North West Territories, later to become known as the province of Saskatchewan. The town was named Wishart after their family.

Daniel Wishart, as a young man, made several trips into the Grande Prairie, Lake Saskatoon and Beaverlodge areas by horseback, sleigh and on foot.

Harold and his father arrived by train in Beaverlodge in January 1938 to check out and purchase the H. W. Rogers Drug store on the site of the present Treasury Branch.

On June 2, 1939 Harold and Olive were married in Grande Prairie at her home. Their eldest son, Ron was born in Grande Prairie and their daughter, Diane and younger son, Dan were born in Beaverlodge. In 1943 Rusty Olson, with the help of Harold, built their home.

After the fire of June, 1948 which destroyed a whole business block in town, Harold built a new drug store in conjunction with the Beaverlodge Meat Market and the Young and Dobson Medical Clinic. He operated the store until his retirement in 1969. Ron Jarvis remembers when the structure was going up. His

grandpa Wishart was working on the scaffold when it pulled away from the wall and he plunged 20 feet into the store basement. His face was covered with blood and his shoulder broken, a scary experience for both grandpa and Ron, then only eight years old.

Harold was an idealist; he thought no malice of anyone. Ron remembers him being angry only once and that was on a five-day hunting trip when he and Gordon McMurray lost 30 games of crib in a row to Ron and Nick Nasedkin.

Harold was a friend to everyone who came into the drug store and had a smile for everyone as well as a sense of humor. He spent his leisure hours playing hockey for the Beaverlodge Blue Bombers, curling, hunting, fishing and golfing. He was mayor of the town for several years and was interested in the building of the Community Centre. He saw the town grow from a small village to the size it is today and came to know all the wilderness areas in the country as he was an avid lover of the great out-doors.

Olive worked with Harold in the drug store most of the time and was a help to everyone in selecting everything from veterinary supplies to cosmetics. With a shortage of veterinarians in the area, this service was most appreciated and Olive became knowledgeable in animal medicine, she saved many animals where the veterinary failed. When Dudley Bristow was losing valuable milk cows, Olive was



The Jarvis family at the swimming hole, Red Willow River.



Harold Jarvis engaged in serious business.



determined that it was due to a deficiency of phosphorus. Agricultural experts and two veterinarians did not agree. However, Olive's diagnosis proved correct and it was later recognized as a problem throughout Alberta. No matter what time of day or night, Olive and Harold opened their store to anyone requiring their help.

Olive spent hours behind the wheel of the Dodge driving school children to track meets, basketball, hockey and ball games. She also managed a Beaverlodge Boys' 13-16 years hockey team. She spent six years as secretary-treasurer of the School Board, with Dudley Bristow as chairman. The Beaverlodge I.O.D.E. was formed in her home and little Diane Jarvis, in a pretty green velvet dress served lunch to the group of ladies who were interested in the work of the organization.

Ron Jarvis, their eldest son was introduced to drug store life as a young boy, often assisting Harold and Olive behind the counter. He graduated in pharmacy in 1963 and worked for a short period in Edmonton, only to leave and enter the medical field, graduating in 1968 from the University of Alberta as a physician and surgeon. He took his internship in Calgary and then practiced in Leduc before moving to Beaverlodge in the fall of 1969. In 1972 he built the Beaverlodge Medical Clinic. In 1966 he had married Carolyn Bray, a graduate nurse from the University of Alberta. They have three children, Kelly Susan, Kimberly Alice and Daniel Robin. In 1970, under the direction of the hospital and the Willow Lodge chapter of the I.O.D.E. Carolyn set up the program for the volunteer organization, "Candy Strippers" and has been working with the group for the past four years.

Diane grew up in Beaverlodge where she took her schooling, and was interested in basketball, track and softball. After graduating from the Royal Alexandra Hospital in 1965 with her R.N. she worked at the Peace River hospital and at the U. of A. hospital in Edmonton. She married Douglas Bienert of Leduc, a graduate of agriculture specializing in animal husbandry and who later received his master's degree in California. They have two boys, Kent Douglas and Theron Russill.



Dan Wishart on the trail, 1912.

Daniel, the youngest Jarvis, loved the outdoors as his grandfather Wishart. Often a team of big yellow Labradors would be seen pulling a toboggan with Danny as driver, down the streets of Beaverlodge. On Saturday afternoons, he and Stanley Bristow would travel the six miles square, shooting squirrels, a pest of the certified seed farmers. He learned to hook up a dog team from Ron who originally had trained his Collie, Pal and the first golden Lab owned by the Jarvises. They would be harnessed up every morning for a trip out to Gary Dicks.

Danny enjoyed basketball, track and was very active in cadets. He was best shot in a rifle training program and was sent on to Ottawa to compete for the Canadian Cadet team to go to England. Of the 125 in the competition in Canada, he placed sixth so the following summer the 12 top riflemen spent the summer touring England and competing at Bisley, near London. After high school, he entered the University of Alberta and received his B.A. He married Linda Hiller, a graduate pharmacist and they have one daughter, Katharine Margaret and reside in Calgary where Dan works with the Department of Social Development and Linda dispenses in a drug store.

Harold Jarvis passed away October 24, 1972 at the University of Alberta Hospital in Edmonton during open heart surgery. Olive continues to reside in Beaverlodge.

#### LLOYD JEWITT

Lloyd George Jewitt was born at Kincaid, Saskatchewan in 1914. He lived in Leask, Saskatchewan for five years where he worked and completed his grade 12. In August, 1937 he arrived in Beaverlodge. His first job was as a mechanic in Allen and Davis's Garage, G. M. Dealers. He went to work for the J. W. Cox Ford Garage and International Dealer in February, 1938. In November of that year he returned to Leask and was married to Zoe Coleman. Their first son, Roger was born in Beaverlodge in 1940.

Lloyd enlisted in the Army and instructed in motor and motorcycle mechanics from 1941 until 1945 at Hamilton and Kingston, Ontario. Their second son, Jack was born at Kingston in 1945. The family returned to Beaverlodge in November, 1945 and Lloyd went into partnership with J. W. Cox. In 1951, the building which is now the Town Hall was erected and used for International Harvester Sales and Service.

Lloyd and Zoe purchased the E. MacDonell small holding at the edge of town in 1947 which they still hold.

In 1951 they were happy when their daughter, Eileen was born. In this year they bought out J. W. Cox who was retiring. Lloyd ran the business, known as Jewitt Motors, until 1969 when he sold out to Eldon Ray.

Lloyd spent a year attending the college in Grande Prairie and then attended the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He is now teaching Industrial Arts in Sexsmith, Alberta.

The Jewitt children are all married and living in this country. Roger married Sandra Waters and is practising law in Grande Prairie. They have three children.



Jack married Audrey Fair of Hythe. They have twin daughters, Dana and Trina and live on the home farm at Beaverlodge, where he teaches physical education in the high school.

Eileen married Peter Martin and is living in Dawson Creek where she is a dietitian in the hospital.

#### REGINALD E. LEAKE

We all knew Reg Leake. He always had time to chat when we were in town with time to spare. He was a good friend and a fine citizen. He came from England after World War I to Beaverlodge. Reg had served with the Seaforth Highlanders in the Imperial Army from 1914-1918. He was badly wounded and gassed the results of which helped to shorten his life.

On his arrival in Canada he attended an agricultural college in Nova Scotia. Too, he was a member of one of Canada's Bisley Shoot teams. When he came west, he was interested in trapping, but soon gave that up. He homesteaded south of the Beaverlodge river, across from Eddie Browns. He saw great beauty in his Lake Opal, an enlarged mud hole which has since dried up. His neighbors repeatedly schooled him in the art of dropping a tree in the direction intended, all to no avail.

Reg moved into Beaverlodge and set up a photography studio and for many years was an able ally of W. D. Albright in photographing visitors to the Experimental Farm and developing the Albright film. Les Harris remembered him best for his epic photograph of the Kinuseo Falls. Reg Leake with his ailing leg and large pack of camera equipment and aided by Bert Watson, clambered over deadfall for a full day to shoot that picture. It was submitted to a British Empire Photographer's Competition; we never heard the outcome, although the previous year Reg had the honor to receive third prize for another entry.

Reg Leake was very active in the affairs of the Canadian Legion, dating back as far as 1932 when he was secretary, an office he served for several years. He died peacefully in his studio home on February 13, 1943 and was buried in the Beaverlodge cemetery.



Corp. R. E. Leake, 16th Battalion, Canadian Scottish Regiment. World War I.



Reg Leake.

#### NELLIE AND LLOYD LEE

Nellie was born at "The Green," Cumberland County and came to Arcola, Saskatchewan with her parents. There she met Lloyd Lee who was born at Brantford, Ontario in 1897. He farmed at Red Jacket, Saskatchewan for a time. With his wife and two children, Calvin and Dorothy, he moved to Beaverlodge in 1930. Here he started working on the section until he retired in 1964.

There are three children, Calvin (Kelly) principal of Bear Canyon School, Dorothy of Hythe and Melvin in Calgary, is a Field Supervisor for Alberta Coal Sales. A fourth child, a grandson, grew up at Lees, Jack Barton, the well-known athlete and businessman in Grande Prairie.

Lloyd served in two world wars. During World War I he was a German prisoner of war for two and a half years. He was always interested in sports and used to curl. Then too, he was an active supporter of junior hockey by providing transportation as well as being a cheering spectator. He was a member of the Legion and the Elks. On March 23, 1968 he passed away and is buried in the Grande Prairie Cemetery.

Nellie apart from home duties became involved in service to the hospital in medical records, laboratory and x-ray work or wherever her versatile talents could be employed. She is a member of the United Church and of the Royal Purple. She does visiting of shut-ins and senior citizens. She was one of the first lady curlers when the Beaverlodge rink was opened and continued for many years. Now she is taking up a new sport — golfing.

The community is glad that she continues to reside here.

#### ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION No. 121

The Beaverlodge Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion got its roots from the G.W.V.A. Branch in Lake Saskatoon. One active member of those years is still a life member of our branch today: George Martin. He was active in raising funds for the Lake Saskatoon Branch and served as their treasurer.

The charter was granted to the Beaverlodge





World War I veterans. Back row: Ed Moore, Bill Baird, Maurice Lowe, John McNaught, Art Funnell, Charles Mills, Magnus Johnson. Front row: Fred McFadzen, George Martin, Art Walton, Bill Mussack, Eugene Probst, Bill McKay and Ed Heller.

# HONOR ROLL

## 1914-18 ~ 1939-45

Sidney Crane : Bruce Albright  
Percy Marcereau : G Bond  
Frank Tole : Maurice Brown  
O.M.Tulk : John East  
James Watt : Allan Eastman  
Harry Black : Delbert Elliott  
G.Davis : Robert Gibson  
Reid Stone : Alfred Hotte  
William Lay : Ralph M'Brian  
L Allan McKinnie : Ralph Pool  
Jess Mortwedt : John Mortwedt  
John Scully



Branch of the G.W.V.A. on March 23, 1920. The president was Frank Reynolds and the secretary, Victor Sharpe.

When the Royal Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League replaced the G.W.V.A. the Beaverlodge Branch received its charter on October 17, 1932. The president was Walter Bond, long time postmaster in Beaverlodge. Mr. Bond held office for three years.

It will be remembered that the B.E.S.L. Branch acquired a building of their own, called "The Legion Club Room". This was in the mid-thirties. The Beaverlodge Band was allowed to practise weekly in the building free of charge. The Board of Trade and

other organizations rented it for meetings for the nominal fee of \$15 per year.

In these early years of the Legion it was their aim to look out for the needs of the children as well as their own comrades in need. The records show accounts of Christmas parties held in the club room for the children of the village as well as receipts for monies spent in helping their veterans.

Every November 11 the Branch has held Remembrance Day in reverence by starting in the morning with a parade led by the Beaverlodge Band, to the interdenominational church service. In the evening there is a dance. In the afternoon there is a free show for all children and following the show there is a stampede for the ice cream the Legion dishes up. In later years a banquet for veterans and wives was held at noon.

A cairn was built in front of the Community Centre to honor those comrades "who paid the supreme sacrifice". A work bee was organized and rocks and scrap iron were hauled. Alex (Scotty) Ross with the help of some members built it. It was dedicated by George Stretton, November 11, 1951.

The Legion has sponsored boys' hockey and ball teams during the years, also has made donations to students attending courses and seminars of education or sports, and to the Beaverlodge Library, C.N.I.B. and Polio Funds in Alberta. For a period of several years it sponsored and financed the Beaverlodge Majorettes.

From its beginning in 1947 it sponsored the Beaverlodge Army Cadets Corps No. 2342 until it was disbanded in 1971. At this time the Legion was recognized as one of the longest continuous sponsors of a corps in western Canada.

Several young men through their start in Cadets, went on to careers in military academies. Two Cadets, Esdale Gaudin and Gary McDonald went on to train as instructors, carrying on as older men left town or retired. The rating of the Beaverlodge Corps through the years was a credit to them and the sponsoring body.

The success of the Corps will long be a credit to the founders, Robert Hume, George O'Brien and Arthur Dixon.

For several years following the end of World War II the Legion held an Easter Dance, when the men of the Branch came out dressed as women and formed a Fashion Parade. Many were the humorous scenes as George Stretton would read out the names and describe the costumes. One in particular comes to mind, the shotgun wedding scene, featuring Herb Wolfe, the father, Cameron Hume, the bride and Jim Nasedkin, the groom. Herb carried a double-barrelled shotgun.

On a more serious side were the years the Branch sponsored the "May Queen" Easter dance. This was a queen contest involving Wembley, Beaverlodge, Elmworth and Hythe schools. The queen was decided by a popular ballot at the dance. She was presented with a wrist watch and the ladies in waiting received costume jewelry. The Queen reigned for one year helping in Legion functions.

The Legion continues to take part in community



projects and in helping in many ways. As its members grow older the ranks grow thinner and as this takes place, more work falls on the shoulders of the few. As long as there are veterans we shall need a Legion to look out for their needs.

### THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION LADIES' AUXILIARY

The Royal Canadian Legion Ladies' Auxiliary came about as the result of a common bond of ex-service men's wives, all of similar age and circumstance and it would be a night out when dad could look after the children.

March 11, 1946 was the organization meeting and the charter night June 18, 1946 and it was active until the end of 1947. The first president was Mrs. Jessamy Archer. The members had teas to welcome war-brides — Audrey Anderson being one of them. Parcels were packed and sent to those people overseas who had befriended "our boys," during the war. They helped the men with canvassing for Red Cross and did hospital mending.

They re-organized February 12, 1952 with Mrs. K. Rollins as president. They formed as the helping hand for the B.E.S.L. Over the years the membership has had its peaks and dips; it nearly folded a few years ago, but each member who gave serious thought to it knew within themselves that it must go on, and go on and up it did.

Over the years it has fulfilled well its commitments, which are first to vets and widows and the dependents. Each year money has gone out to help provide treats at various hospitals in Calgary, Colonel Belcher, Colonel Mewburn, Oliver and Ponoka. We have canvassed for the polio fund, helped the Salvation Army financially. There were various means of asking the public to help us raise these funds, but some of the more unusual ones were the Klondike Nights held for two years. The members were Can-can dancers; Annie Ross was Klondike Kate. These costumes were cut out at Peggy Martins; everyone enjoyed the fun.

One time we sold bottles and bottles of vanilla to earn a big coffee urn; all our neighbors and relations were well stocked with vanilla for a while. We hosted Christmas cadet parties and put floats in May 24th parade; sometimes we'd decorate it in Edwin John's garage.

Many names that stand out over the years are Audrey Anderson, Annie Ross, Thirza Harris, Virginia MacDonald, Mae and Mrs. MacDonald, Eleanor Nasedkin, Bernice John, Margaret Hume, Mrs. Lossing, Peggy Martin, Mrs. George Martin, Lena Lowe, then there are those who have been presidents many times — Isabel Lay, Helen Hennig, Martha Dunbar and Audrey Lowe who has been secretary for many years. Mrs. Fern Carson is a life member.

At the ball games we ran concession booths, the popcorn maker couldn't keep up; some of the members would make it at home and run it over still hot.

In 1955 the ladies first joined the men for the November 11th Banquet and social; the ladies provided the food. We continue to join them for this Remembrance Day.

There was an Easter Monday dance put on by the ladies, Mr. Tyrrell looked after the money at the door and Booth Cook was floor manager.

All in all the Legion think we are a valuable asset to them and that is our supreme objective to promote their work.



1961 Royal Canadian Legion Ladies' Auxiliary. Back row: Lois Guitard, Olive McDonald, Anne Walker, May McDonald, Virginia McDonald, Eleanor Nasedkin. Front row: Audrey Anderson, Helen Hennig, Noel McLean, Zone Commander.

### THE ALFRED LETTINGTONS

East is East and West is West but in this case the twain DID meet.

In the second decade of the 20th century on a cold winter day in February a baby boy was born in the city of LaTuque, Quebec. His name was Alfred Lettington. Six years later in the Eastern hemisphere in sunny Dutch Indonesia a baby girl made her entry into this world. Her name was Jackie Tideman.

By medium of war Jackie met her "Veteran" Canadian in Holland in 1945 and handsome Alf instantly won the heart of the Dutch girl. Veni Vidi Vici!

In spite of the warnings about the uncivilized life, no electricity, no running water indoors and an outdoor toilet the two were married in May of that year in Holland. Jackie followed Alf in 1946 to the land of promises, of good crops and lots of sunshine.

Alas, fate had different plans for the young couple. With ever varying terrible torment the elements struck in lecherous lust with undue snow storms in summer, frost, hail and pouring rains at harvest time. And all this fertile land brought forth was an abundance of boys.

Five healthy virile sons were born in swift succession to the hapless couple, Reg, Barry, Rickie, Joe and Tom.

Twelve years were spent in the senseless struggle at the farm in Lymburn in an effort to make the soil produce and make a living but all to no avail.

Alf went to work as a mechanic, first in Hythe and later in Beaverlodge. Jackie tried her hand at nursing again.

They moved to Beaverlodge in January, 1958. Alf's health started failing in 1966. He spent the last 3½



Alf and Jackie Lettington.



Reginald, Barry, Rick and Joe Lettington.

years as a commissioner at the R.C.A.F. Station until he passed away in September, 1970.

In the same year Reg married Carol Parliament of Worsley. The couple reside to date in Edmonton where Reg is a chef, feeding the hollow, hungry stomachs of the gourmets.

Barry married Carol Hekster. They are living in Grande Prairie and he is working as a partsman and mechanic, and Jackie has become the proud grandmother of a little girl named Tera.

Ricky and Tom work in Grande Prairie, still trying to find their status in life and Joe has been in Vancouver, building homes for the ever increasing population.

Jackie is still working in the Beaverlodge Hospital after 17 years of service. She states that she is fast becoming a relic in the annals of the town's history.

## THE LITTLE FAMILY

Albert Garfield Little was born at Winnipeg on August 4, 1884. On August 25, 1917, at Edmonton he married Hazel Belee Cameron, the third eldest child of John and Isabelle Cameron of Springhill, Nova Scotia.

Albert, better known as Bert, came from an experienced grain buying family. His father and brother Lawrence were also involved in this business in Dinsmore and Wysdon, Saskatchewan.

Hazel (Cameron) Little came west in 1916 as a young teacher and settled in Saskatchewan. However, her first employment was with the Royal Bank of Canada where she worked until her marriage. After their marriage the young couple moved to Houghton, Saskatchewan. Upon their arrival there Bert took employment with the Searle Grain Co. Ltd. as area superintendent.

Their first child, Donald Cameron was born July 4, 1918 at Saskatoon. In 1921, daughter Katherine Isobella was born at Trochu, Alberta. The youngest of the family, Lawrence Garfield (Laurie) was born in 1925 at Houghton.

In the spring of 1927 Bert Little sold his interest in the grain business to his brother and moved to Wembley, at that time the end of the steel. There he engaged in grain track buying until the fall of 1928 at which time the family home was moved by sleighs and steam engine to Beaverlodge. This home still stands at its original site in Beaverlodge.

In 1929 Bert resumed his grain track buying and later joined the Northern Grain Co., today the National Grain Co. In 1941 he again became independent in the grain track buying business.

Following completion of High School the children left Beaverlodge. Don enrolled in the University of Saskatoon, graduating in Mechanical Engineering. Kay went to Calgary General Hospital and received her R.N., and later her public health diploma in nursing. Laurie went to technical school in Calgary. The family also served in the Armed Services, Don in the Army, Kay as an Army Nursing sister, and Laurie in the Navy.

In the spring of 1947 Mrs. Little opened the "Little Style Shoppe", a dress boutique, which remained successful until the Littles decided to retire to Edmonton, in October, 1963. After spending one winter in the Capital city they decided to move back to the community that was "home", Beaverlodge.

Shortly after their return Bert passed away in May 1964. Following his death Mrs. Little went back to Edmonton where she became involved in those things she loved best — church work and a part-time teaching position. On October 3, 1967 she passed away suddenly while teaching a class.

The eldest son, Donald Cameron passed away suddenly as a result of a freak tornado which tore through Windsor, Ontario and demolished the curling rink where he was curling. Don was the founding president of that curling club and always an active member.

The Little family found it hard to tell of the life of their folks in Beaverlodge and left it to others to reminisce about their days here.





Hazel and Bert Little.



Bert Little, W. D. Albright with F. C. Little and L. H. Little visitors from Saskatchewan.



The A. G. Little residence.

Our first recollections of the Littles dates back to the early thirties when they were ardent bridge players and were looked upon as part of the "upper 400" of the town. They did their share of entertaining at big dinners, luncheons, teas and bridge parties — an environment in which Mrs. Little's talents as a hostess really blossomed. Perhaps it was about this time that Mrs. Little became the "Mrs. Vanderbilt of Beaverlodge". We recall one enterprising C.G.I.T. leader, who appreciating her gifts of being a charming hostess, asked Mrs. Little to give the C.G.I.T. an afternoon lesson in the etiquette of setting and serving a table, using all her niceties of shining silver, sparkling crystal, matched dinnerware and white linen — a lesson not soon forgotten.

Lest from the foregoing it appear that the Littles were social butterflies only, banish the thought. A Ladies Aid to the United Church was formed as soon as the new church was underway. Mrs. Little, long a member of the Women's Missionary Society, joined this indefatigable group. They worked to furnish the manse, to keep up the utilities at the church through church bazaars, chicken suppers and bake sales. Mrs. Little served as their president several times throughout the years and eventually became an Honorary Life Member of the U.C.W. One of her pet projects was buying the three chairs that graced the dias in the old church and are now in the Narthex of our new church. She was also determined the church have an addition of a Tower and a Minister's Study but the construction of the church forbade the feasibility and the money raised for this Tower was eventually used for furnishings of the renovated basement dining hall. She also began a "gallery of pictures" of each of the ministers who had served Bentum United Church.

Chicken suppers were a yearly event and Mrs. Little lent her graces serving there as would a prima donna. Only Mrs. Little could come dressed as for an evening out, work all evening, and go home looking as smart as when she arrived. And only Mrs. Little could establish a prestige in the serving of chicken suppers — according to her you "earned" your right to scrape plates — after you'd served your apprenticeship as a dishwasher, dish dryer and kitchen flunkie. Somehow she managed to convey the impression that she was the hostess of each affair.

Mrs. Little will be remembered as having a many sided personality. Frank and determined she was at times, at others charming and amiable. Another time you'd find her "organizing, supervising and deputizing" — her own words for what she considered an efficient president. And then there'd be the times when she'd be laughing at herself. Like the time she told her dinner guests the gruesome details of chloroforming eight adorable kittens in her tin bread box because Bert just didn't have the heart for it. She said she felt so badly she might as well have been killing a man. Understandably her guest refused a second roll.

Another time Rev. Harrison stopped by for tea and son Laurie insisted on playing, "Down By The Railroad Tracks" on the record player. She felt so mortified that as soon as the Reverend had left she put



the record on again and hunched close by to hear how 'bad' the words really were — and Rev. Harrison returned for his gloves.

She told this story about her school teaching days in Saskatchewan. She was teaching a lesson about the lowly gopher and considered herself quite an authority on the subject — until her pupils assured her that "gopher" was not pronounced "goofer".

Mrs. Little was often called upon to help people prepare speeches and toasts. On one occasion a high school student was to propose a toast to the school board. Mrs. Little felt she'd done a good stroke by having him include, "as long as there's a Pool there'll be a school board." And talking of high school students — how many remember Mrs. Little's parody of the Stein Song that gave the 1934-35 class such a rousing school song? And the pop-corn balls that the Littles always made for Halloweeners?

And do you remember how Bert campaigned for trees to be planted on the streets of Beaverlodge? And how he kept their yard up so nicely it was one of the show places of Beaverlodge? Of this effort Mrs. Little said, "Bert wants to beautify the town! I'll beautify the women!" — meaning her dress shop.

Another side of Mrs. Little's character blossomed when called upon to present devotionals. As chairman of the Devotional Committee of Alberta Conference she presented a memorable devotion on the "Seven Jewels". The ladies will recall her dipping dramatically into her jewel box as she enlarged on her theme of rubies for talents, diamonds for possessions and pearls for personality, etc. This devotional was mimeographed and circulated from the Dominion W.W. through their devotional committees across Canada.

None of us recall that the Littles grew old. Mrs. Little especially preferred to hob-nob with younger people and kept herself young at heart by keeping abreast of all the local and world events. She died as she lived — busy and active to the last.

In the Beaverlodge United Church the Little family has placed the amplifiers for the organ as a tribute to their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Little.

## REG LITTLE

Reg Little went to Mile 83 in 1928 to buy grain for the Midland and Pacific Grain Co. Mile 83 indicated the distance from the last divisional point on the E.D. and B.C. at Rycroft. The siding was later named Albright in honor of the superintendent of the Experimental Station.

The day I arrived to open the elevator the building was in the process of being completed. The scaffold fell down and two men were injured and one killed. A work train which happened to be there at the time took them to the nearest hospital, at Grande Prairie.

The first load of grain I bought was from Hugh Thompson, who received No. 1 Northern for it.

I left Albright after completing the season and started buying grain at Beaverlodge with Clarence Lossing and then took over from him the management of the Midland and Pacific where I continued for the next seven years.

My first experience in the town was during my stay at the Beaudet Hotel, the only one in town. I woke up

next morning to discover that I, the hotel and all were going down the road, moving from the Old Town to the new townsite.

In 1928 C. O. Pool was secretary of the town. He resigned and George Slaney became secretary. I was on the town council for three years and for one year I was the mayor. I suppose one of the first big community projects of the town was the organizing of the curling club and building the new curling rink, about the year 1933. Alan Elliot was probably the instigator and he worked hard to get it started.

Marjorie and I have always had fond memories of Beaverlodge and the people who lived there during our stay. We are now comfortably located on a farm near Westlock.

In the elevator Reg was not adverse to good-natured banter with his customers, thus when Bill Hurley drove in with a load of grain Reg commented that one of the horses was well behind the other.

Bill replied, "He is just as fast as his mate. It's just that he started slower".

## THE STUART LITTLE STORY

In August of 1960, the Littles, Stuart, Grace, Elizabeth and John, left Wembley to settle on the Alf Bayer farm, five miles south of Beaverlodge. In September, Stu went on staff as teacher and vice-principal of the Beaverlodge High School.

In our beautiful country setting, they experienced one of the most colorful autumns ever, overlooking the Halcourt countryside with the Rockies towering in the background.

Alf Bayer and Mel Ray paid frequent visits as they harvested the crops and fed the horses. They also enjoyed the company of the Frank Darbys who had grown a garden there that summer. As fall drew to a close Elizabeth and John celebrated their third and fourth birthdays with the Holidays and Randalls coming from Wembley to make it a joyous occasion.

Early in November, Stu and Grace came down with a serious case of infectious hepatitis. After ten days in hospital, they convalesced at home until Christmas. Winter activities consisted of coaching the High School basketball team for Stu and leading a C.G.I.T. group for Grace. On May 27th, David was born with Dr. Trumper attending. That spring produced a large litter of dogs and a hatching of chickens on the farm. The summer brought a good garden and Stu's memorable trip to Kinuseo Falls with Art Dixon as guide of a ten horse outfit.

Another fall and winter passed and in May 1962 they moved into town to a teacherage built by Henry Penner and supervised by Art Reddon. Everyone in town will recall the episode of "The Fence"!

That summer, Stu attended summer school in Edmonton while Grace tended the children through 31 days of rain in July and a yard without grass. In September 1962, Stu took over the principalship of the school from Harry Sherk. Elizabeth started school with Mrs. Perry as teacher. The family then settled into a routine of curling, square dancing, school, community and church activities. John started school in 1963 with Mrs. Sylvester as teacher.

From 1962-1966, Stu served as president of both



Local and Sub-local A.T.A., president of the Administrative Council and was on the Alberta Science Council. He was also a member of the famed Brothers' Grimm Quartet with Dr. Don Faris, Rev. Barry Moore and Art Newman that entertained at various functions throughout the Peace and sang in the Grande Prairie Theatre's production of *The Music Man*.

In August 1966, they took their first and last trip up the Mighty Peace river to the source of the Parsnip and Finlay Rivers with the Kylo Brothers. Also during those years Stu, along with friends made canoe trips on the Wapiti, Beaverlodge, Smoky and Peace rivers. In August 1967, Jonas Webber backed up to the front door to load us lock, stock and barrel for a move to Banff. It was with mixed feelings indeed that they left their home and dear friends in that friendly little community to begin another chapter of the family story in Banff.



On the Peace River. Kylo Brothers' boat.

#### EDWARD LOVEN

I was born in Becker County, Minnesota. My parents, Hans and Berit Loven came from northern Norway from a place called Tydalan and arrived in Minnesota in the late 1880's. My oldest brother, Alfred and my sister, Ronda were born in Norway. In 1898 my father homesteaded in Marshall County, Minnesota. The homestead is still in the family, now owned by my nephew, Roger Loven.

In the spring of 1920, six of us young fellows decided to take a look at the Peace River country. We arrived in Grande Prairie on May 3rd, after spending three nights and two days on the train from Edmonton. The farmers were still using sleighs to come to town.

Four of my friends looked around and decided that if you had to use sleighs in May, this was no place for them and took the next train back to Edmonton and home. Zak Erickson and I stayed. The first work we got was painting houses for Frank Donald.

We spent the summer in Grande Prairie painting and doing odd carpenter jobs. In the fall I worked for Bill and Fred Roberts on their threshing rig.

It was a wonderful year for crops, 50 bushels No. 2 wheat and 100 bushels of oats to the acre. It really surprised me as the seed was not planted before the last week in May, most of it in June. We finished threshing on the 20th of November and I boarded the train for Minnesota as I had a date to get married on December 2nd, 1920.

The lady was Priscilla Marcia Warner, a nurse who graduated in 1914 at Crookston, Minnesota. She was born in North Dakota not far from Fargo. Her parents had come from Pennsylvania to Minnesota in 1910. Polly had four sisters and three brothers. In my family there were four boys and four girls.

We were married in Warren, Minnesota on December 2, 1920 and the following August headed for



Grace and Stu Little, John, Elizabeth and David, 1963.

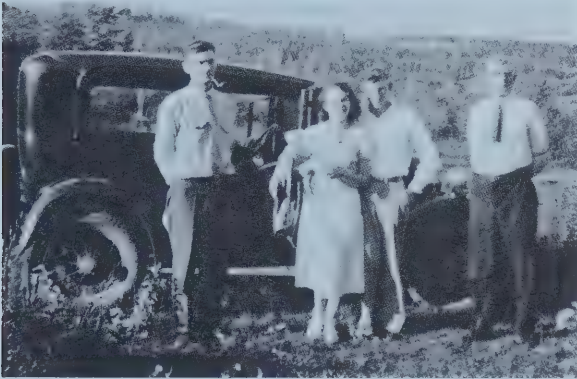


Stu Little (L) and Fred Milnes (with hat) in "The Music Man" production, Grande Prairie.





The Ed Loven family, 1944 (L) Lorna, Sylvia, Warner, Galen, Einar, Princilla, Edward, Eleanor (R) and Mike.



At Taylor Flats, 1930. Ed Loven, Peggy Cooper, Harry Morrow, and George Slaney.

the Peace River country. All the cash we had when we arrived at Grande Prairie was a \$20 bill and part of that was spent for our first night's hotel bill.

The next day Polly went to work in the old log hospital, the "Forbes Hospital", about this time it was being changed to the Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital. I got work with Ole Onstad, a stone mason. By December 1 we were the proud owners of a lot with a 12' x 16' one room shack, with some homemade furniture, an old wood cook stove and an air tight heater. We were as the saying goes "sitting pretty". After Christmas we worked for the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company. I was boss of the lumber pilers at Mile 17, not far from Webster, first station north of Sexsmith. Polly was cook for the four man crew. Our wages were \$65.00 a month, for cash and lumber. In the spring of 1922 we had enough lumber and cash to add two rooms to our one-room home.

For the next two years I worked at any job available and somehow managed to make a living.

In 1924 I worked for the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company at Wembley, building storage sheds and a house for their agent. In 1925 I worked with Bert Powell, a bricklayer. We built chimneys all over the country. In 1926 I built three sets of buildings for the Soldiers Settlement Board under the Empire Settlement Scheme. Each set of buildings consisted of a 20' x

20' three-room house, 20' x 24' barn and an outhouse. The contract price each set was \$1,125.00, labor and materials.

The years of 1927 and 1928, in partnership with Charlie Kezar, we built school houses, barns and houses in the country and in Grande Prairie. Our last contract was the E.D. and B.C. railway station in Sexsmith. It is still there.

On the 29th of April, 1929, I started working for the Frontier Lumber Company in Beaverlodge taking over from Joe Thompson, the first agent. This job lasted for 32 years. In 1961 I was pensioned off. During these years we got to know a lot of wonderful people.

Looking back on those depression years of the 1930's, it's a wonder that we could do any business at all, with the price of farm products at that time: Oats 6 cents per bushel, wheat 27 cents, hogs \$8.00 each and butcher steers 4 cents. To collect accounts we had to resort to all kinds of tactics. One instance, to cover a \$700.00 account a farmer agreed to give us a crop mortgage: we accepted and had it registered. In the fall, at threshing time we sent Mike Ryan, the drayman in Beaverlodge at that time, because he owned the only truck in town to haul in the wheat. He trucked in 10 loads of approximately 75 bushels per load. Wheat at that time was 25½ cents per bushel. It turned out that a bank had also been given a crop mortgage for seed grain but failed to have it registered. The bank manager came to pick up the grain tickets and found that they were made out to the Frontier Lumber Company. The elevator agent gave our tickets to the bank but they could not cash them, so kept them for 12 months and after a year's storage against them sent them back to us. Checking with the elevator we found that the wheat was worth 26 cents a bushel, with 24 cents storage, leaving 2 cents a bushel net. However during the next six weeks the price of wheat went up to 46 cents. The balance of the account was collected 20 years later when the farm was sold.

Our family consists of three girls and three boys. The four oldest were born in Grande Prairie, Eleanor in 1922, Sylvia in 1924, Einar in 1926, Warner in 1928. Lorna in 1929 and Galen in 1933 were born after we moved to Beaverlodge.

Eleanor married Bob Martin in 1948. They have four boys, all grown up. Robbie in Pakistan, Ricky in Grande Prairie, Neil in Grande Prairie and David at home in grade 12. The Martins make their home in the town of Peace River. Bob is in the insurance business, and Eleanor with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.

Sylvia married Jim Arneson of Edgerton in 1948. They have a family of three girls and three boys. They are Bernice, Brenda, Beverly, Bruce, Brian and Blair. Jim is employed by the Alberta Gas Trunk Line. The Arnesons live in Brooks, Alberta.

Einar married Joan Dahl in 1950. They have two girls, Nadine Brandon and Beverly. Einar works for Davis and Olsenberg in Beaverlodge.

Warner married Joy Gilmour, a nurse in 1951. They have three boys and two girls. They are Larry, Eddie, Maureen, Greg and Donna. Warner is a 1951 graduate in Geology from the University of Alberta. He started



working for the Western Geophysical Company in 1952 and is now head of their operation in Canada. They live in Calgary.

Lorna married Harry Forat in 1952. They had two girls, Marcia and Monica. Harry passed away in 1954. Lorna is now Mrs. Glenn Allen. They live in Puerto Rico.

Galen, a graduate in Education from the University of Alberta in 1956, teaches biology at the Eric Hamber High School in Vancouver. He is not married and makes his home in North Vancouver.

Polly and I are still living in the home we built in Beaverlodge in 1930.

This account indicates the sterling home life of the Loven family. Polly and Ed have been community supporters and builders. She has been an indefatigable worker in the United Church. Too her home was open to the women from the outlying areas while they waited admission to the hospital. Ed always had his books in good order whether at the lumber yard, Community Centre or the Curling rink. When he made ice for the curlers, it was the way he wanted it, straight and true.

### THE LOGGING BEES

Consider the portrait of a logging bee. It's ingredients include a need, a scarcity of money, a sense of community purpose, some tall trees and a coordinator.

The needs of the developing community were great and the construction of several projects would have been delayed had the people not turned out on a self-help basis; the hospital, the first two-sheet curling rink with an adjoining skating rink with waiting room, the Community Centre, the present curling rink, seat and dressing rooms of the new skating rink and the South Peace Centennial Museum.

Each project involved between 40,000 and 100,000 feet of planed lumber. The start was made in securing a timber berth, collecting whatever funds which were available to pay expenses and then mustering a volunteer crew which would donate about a week's work. Ralph Carrell was an early co-ordinator and his place was taken in later projects by Harold Pool. There are various means of community service and those men who worked in the bush for long hours with saws, axes and canthooks worked valiantly to aid the building of Beaverlodge, by turning out good lumber at minimum cost at a time when the economy was low and government grants about nil.

Cliff Stacey was one of the later volunteers. His donation was two fine trees from neighbor Doug McFarlane's woodlot! Doug was agreeable but asked that the committee wait 50 years to claim it.

### HOWARD AND JANE LOCK

Howard Lock was born in 1923 and at age 17 he joined the army and trained in Edmonton, Huntington, Quebec and Camp Bordon, Ontario. In November, 1941 he was posted overseas on active service. From December 1941 until September 1943 he served in the Battle of Britain. He was with the Royal Canadian Dragoons, which previously had used horses; now they converted to armoured vehicles and motor bikes and



"Our wedding day" Janie and Howard Lock, with attendants, Margaret and Larry.



Janie Lock and family, 1956.

Howard became an instructor. In September 1943 he was posted to Sicily and from there to Italy and then to France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. He returned to England in October, 1945. In November 1945 he married Jane Buchanan Forrest, a sister of Margaret Forrest who married Howard's brother, Larry. Jane had joined the Royal Air Force in 1941. She trained at Bridgenorth, Shropshire, was posted to Bomber Command, Abingdon, Berkshire and served as a secret and confidential clerk posted to Stannington, Northumberland. Later she was an accountant for three and one-half years.

Howard and Jane resided in Petworth, England until March, 1946 when Howard returned to Canada and started work at the Beaverlodge Research Station.



Jane arrived in Canada in August, 1946. They have three girls.

Catherine Anne is married to Paul Martin Moors of Grande Prairie. They live in Leduc. Paul works at the International Airport as a Radar Air Traffic Controller. They have two sons, Andrew Thomas and Daniel Martin.

Maureen Janet married Richard Michael Moors of Grande Prairie, a brother to Paul. She is a school teacher in Grande Prairie and Rick drives for Kakwa Valley Logging. They have one son, Matthew Kenneth.

Dorothy Jane lives at home and is a secretary for the Department of Health and Social Development in Grande Prairie.

Janie and Howard have many memories. Howard's earliest goes back to school days with Larry, the oldest one in school, herding the brood along lest they daudle and freeze. In the Air Force one of Janie's off-hour duties was to guard public buildings from bomb attack and her worry was what she could do in the event of an attack. One girl stood on the roof, one guarded the interior of the building and one the exterior. Fortunately no bombs came their way, but it was eerie at times when in the dark of night the window shutters would bang.

Janie had two wartime experiences, one bad, the other good. The first involved a transport truck with 20 personnel rolling over a steep embankment. She still has not fully recovered from a back injury. The other that she married "the Canadian" and as a Canadian she was able to secure her discharge from the Air Force. She also recalls that life in Canada, particularly living in the Old Town was quite unlike her home town, Edinburgh, in many, many ways.

Janie and Howard do like to dance, and their style is somewhat different to the Beaverlodge mode, if such there be. Janie explains that as a girl she took lessons in ball room and Highland dancing. When they first met she tried to have some of this rub off on Howard as "he danced just like an Englishman".

#### WELKER MAYO

Welker Mayo was born in Paris, Illinois in 1908. His father was Irish and English descent and his mother, a teacher was Irish and Scotch.

Welker came to Rouleau, Saskatchewan in 1918 with his parents to farm and moved on to Bear Lake in 1929. In 1933 he married Dagmar, "Dee" Anderson whose parents came from Denmark to McGrath where her father was a carpenter and on to a homestead in 1933 at New Fish Creek.

Late in 1935 Dee and Welker moved to Beaverlodge and bought the Mike Ryan livery barn and commenced to haul water and mail from the station to the post office. Later he spent three years at the maintenance camp, mile 101, Alaska Highway, worked for the Grande Prairie Lumber Co., fired boilers at the airport until they were converted to oil, and was 12 years in maintenance in the Provincial Building, Grande Prairie. He retired in 1973 and the Mayos took an extended trip to the United States.

There are four girls. Thelma married Lowie Stiefel of Holden who works for the Department of Highways. Maria works in the Calgary General hospital. Jeanette is married to Sheehan Walinstein, a farmer near Peace River and Clarice is married to Fred Walinstein, a heavy duty operator in Grande Prairie.

The Mayos bought a house and lot in Beaverlodge



Welker Mayo's residence.





Guy Ireland and Mayo's outfit—hauling the mail, 35 cents a trip.

when they arrived. The cost was \$252 with monthly payments of \$6.65. They lived in it for nine years, rented it for 14 years, then sold it for \$1400. Beaverlodge remembers them as happy people who were always willing to help. For her part, "Dee's" most vivid memory of Beaverlodge is the time when she along with Mrs. Henry Lunam and Mrs. Adelord Hotte were patients in the maternity hospital in the Old Town. It was during the coldest spell in winter and daily Dr. Nixon would search out drafts and plug them with tar paper. Dee says that the patients were very cold and that even to this day she has not warmed up.

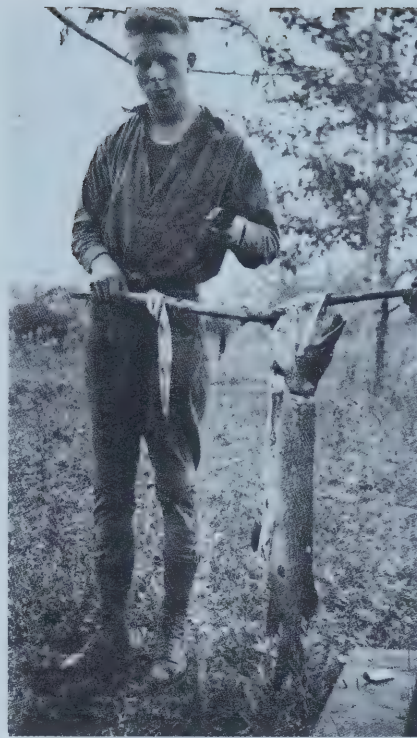
#### BILL McCLYMONT

Bill was born in Newton-Stewart, Wigtownshire, Scotland and came to Cabri, Saskatchewan in 1927; moved to Sangudo in 1930. Sangudo was Belle's home. They were married in 1932. In 1938 they came with their three year old son, Keith to the Beaverlodge area and rented several different farms. Then in 1946 they moved to Beaverlodge where Bill became water and drayman and drove the honey wagon. He hauled the water with a large wooden tank and a fine team of horses which also pulled the dray. Bill filled two big 5-gallon pails and poured them into the barrels that served the people who were not hooked to the town waterline. When progress put Bill out of business and in the late 50's he became janitor in the old brick High school; he carried on in the new High school. You could always be sure of a friendly greetings from Bill when you went through the door, but you'd better make sure you had your muddy boots off. Poor health forced Bill to retire in 1970.

Bill and Belle raised three children, Keith who has two girls and a boy; Heather (Hardin) has two girls and two boys. Kenny married Judy James and has no family. Belle has been a faithful Royal Purple worker for many, many years.

#### NORMAN DOUGLAS McFARLANE

July 1917, I was 12 years old and had just passed Junior Fourth grade at Alton, Ontario where my sister Jean and I had been living with our grandparents William and Christina Dowsnell for some years. Our mother Adelia (Dowsnell) McFarlane had died suddenly the year after I was born. Father James McFarlane had left the family farm at Claremont, On-



Doug McFarlane at Swan Lake, age 20 with a 14½ lb. Jackfish.

tario which dated back to a crown grant to his grandfather James in 1840, to come to the Peace River country with his brother Walter's survey crew as horse wrangler in charge of transportation. My brother Wallace Roy McFarlane left school and followed in 1913.

By 1917 Grande Prairie had a good school and father felt we should join him on his Cut Bank lake farm. Our aunts delivered us at Sarnia into the care of Milton White for the long trip to Grande Prairie. We came by way of S.S. Huronic to Port Arthur, then by train to Edmonton, taxi to Dunvegan yards and a two day trip by the new E.D. and B.C. to Grande Prairie then known as Prairie City. The train was complete with sleeper, colored porter and dining car. The track was at times half submerged in muskeg. I recall looking out the rear door of our coach and seeing past the following car as the cars rocked in opposite directions. Father met us in Prairie City with team and buggy. It was an 18 mile ride to the farm at Cutbank lake. We arrived after dark with brother Wallace waiting for us. Then I remember the bed — rough grey blankets, no sheets like we had been used to. Then the morning with that beautiful clear lake, sandy beach and the ducks, geese and loons calling. I was happy to be home.

I first saw Beaverlodge in 1919 when the Legion Hall on the hill was opened. Wallace took some of his friends in our new Maxwell touring car by way of the lower trail to the dance, and father took me in the buggy over the recently opened mountain trail. On the way home in the dark the buggy hit a stump and I bounced out flat on my back on the road.





Nurse Doris (Lewis) McFarlane.

In 1924 I completed high school, one of the first graduating class of Montrose High in Grande Prairie and joined the staff of the Canadian Bank of Commerce in Grande Prairie as junior, running errands, filling ink wells and changing desk blotters. The salary was \$60.00 per month including the \$10.00 northern allowance plus a free room above the office. The purpose of the free living quarters was to have protection for the cash below, a doubtful benefit in my case. That fall I was transferred to Beaverlodge and worked in the bank there until 1925 and then again in the new town several times. That sold me on the district and I returned to make my home here in 1937 as village and school secretary, total salary \$40.00 per month. Music has been my main hobby, following my father who was a bandsman with the Claremont Ontario Band. That band was organized in 1875 and is still active in 1974. I played with the Grande Prairie Band and orchestra through high school and with various other concert and dance bands while I worked in the bank. I started on father's old alto horn which I still have, followed by a new trumpet he purchased for me for \$35.00 in 1920. Then in 1925 at Beaverlodge I had the first saxophone north of Edmonton, brought in from Edmonton at a cost of around \$100.00. Today's value is \$730.00.

Life in old Beaverlodge 1924-25 never had a dull moment. In summer a riding club took us from Lake Saskatoon to Rio Grande, fishing and swimming in the

Beaverlodge and the Red Willow river and generally exploring. I had a saddle horse from our farm, boarded in E. A. Smith's livery barn, and used father's beautiful Cogshall Montana stock saddle. You could ride all day in that saddle and never get tired. In the winter we played bridge, put on theatrical plays and dances in the hall where I was usually involved as trumpet player. Mail was hauled by the Chet Fay mule teams twice a week. Many hours were spent listening to the first radio in the area. We had a three-tube Attwater Kent with a big horn speaker imported from the States by my roommate in the bank, Ralph Daw, at a cost of \$300.00.

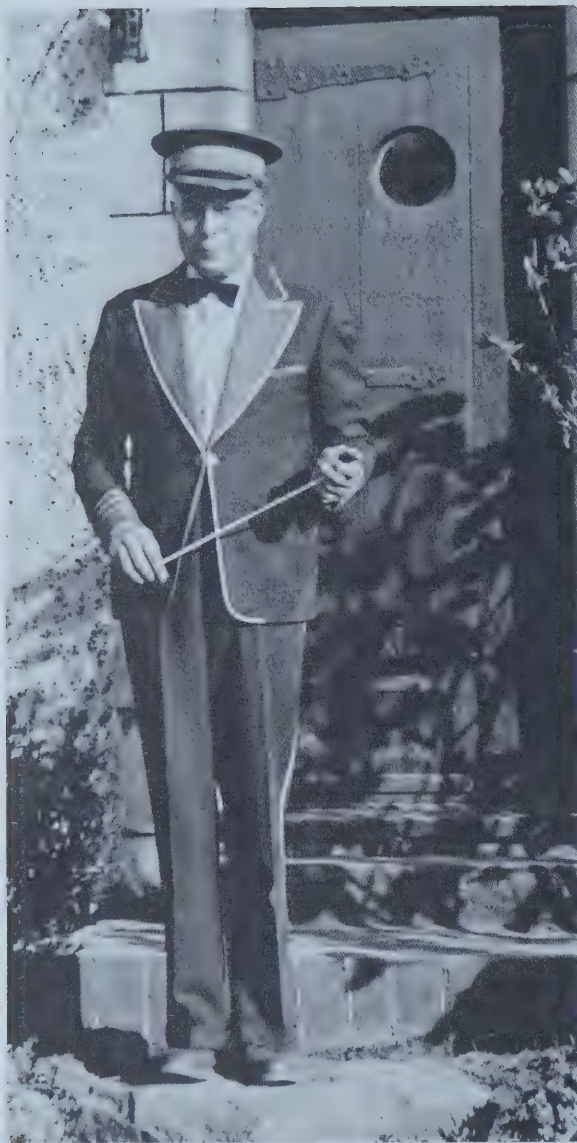
One third of my salary of \$60.00 per month went to Mrs. Smith at the hotel for board and I saved enough to buy that first saxophone. Billy Johnson was a good piano player and I played at many country dances with him. I don't recall any pay for playing in those days. We made our own fun and that didn't cost anything.

I played in the Beaverlodge Band in 1931 and 1934 and undertook to reorganize and lead it when I was settling down in Beaverlodge in the fall of 1937. I was always interested in village, town and community affairs. I have been a member of the Elks Lodge for over 35 years serving as Exalted Ruler and two terms as District Deputy Grande Exalted Ruler. Other activities included president of the Chamber of Commerce, treasurer of the United Church Board, organizer and leader of the McFarlane Dance orchestra playing all over the Peace in the 40's and early 50's, member of the Provincial Music Board 1959-63, School secretary-treasurer 1937 until the school merged with the larger division, secretary-treasurer of the village and town of Beaverlodge 1938-1959, owner and manager of McFarlane Agencies, insurance and real estate 1938 until retirement 1965.

In the 40's I clerked sales for Col. W. A. Hogg, the well known auctioneer and shared his inimitable philosophy of life. We had many, many interesting experiences together. Another vocation has been collecting automobile license plates. My father started the collection with the 1918 plate of his Maxwell car and I carried it on until 1967 when I donated the collection to the Grande Prairie Museum. It included a 1913 plate symbolic of the first car to be driven into the Peace by A. M. Bezanson. The collection also interested the Alberta Museum in Edmonton and I assisted them in securing a similar collection.

We are now living on the Old Town Hill where I started my Beaverlodge career. Our house is on the site of the former G.W.V.A. hall and the view from our windows is the valley and the mountains that so impressed me that evening of the opening dance in 1919. My wife Doris is a Nova Scotian nurse, the former Doris Marie Lewis of Weymouth, Nova Scotia, a graduate of Yarmouth hospital training school, affiliated with the Royal Victoria Hospital of Montreal. Doris recalls that life in Weymouth was very realistic; when the family ate fish, no one stopped to separate the bones lest they would be out distanced. She had been persuaded to come to Beaverlodge by the matron in charge of the local hospital, Muriel McRae, a nursing friend from Montreal days. Arrival in





Bandmaster Doug McFarlane, 1954.

Beaverlodge is recalled as a beautiful snowy day March 1, 1948. Instead of a non-existent taxi, a unique arrangement for transportation was provided — a horse drawn dray. Many first and diversified impressions were favorable and after working on staff for 1½ years we were married. She has taken a very active part in community affairs through participation in nursing, church, home and school, recreation board, craft club, and boys' and girls' camp. And of course, with the rest of the family a member of the Beaverlodge band.

We have three boys all born in Beaverlodge, William James, from a previous marriage and now insurance salesman in Calgary; James Douglas, mining engineer in Vancouver and Lewis Strathern, a mechanical engineer in Calgary. My present hobbies are lapidary, horticulture and learning to play the bagpipes. Doris shares the above except the pipes at

which she draws the line. She is presently chairman of the church board and serves on the executive of the Alberta Nursing Association.

The name Strathern has been in our family since my great-grandfather James McFarlane married Agnes Strathern and emigrated to Canada from Tolcross, Scotland in 1848 with father-in-law, John Trehorn, known as John Strathern. Dating from that 1910-11 survey, our family has been closely associated with the Peace River country.

#### MEMORIES — by Maxine Davis

My early recollections of Beaverlodge, which boasted about 250 citizens, was a road leading from our house, where Smith's apartments now stand, through the hospital grounds and directly kitty corner to Ray's livery stable. At that time there was no hospital, no police barracks nor the house I later grew up in. The road down town seemed long and tiresome for a five-year-old and we did like to stop and pick saskatoons from the many bushes on the hospital grounds.

I also remember the high plank sidewalks and the metal hitching rings where the farmers used to tie their teams and saddle horses while they shopped. There was also a hitching rack behind Gaudin's store that served a double duty, for tying horses and for a playground for all the kids. We spent many an hour skinning the cat on the bars. I don't think our parents appreciated us coming home smelling like a barnyard but that was all in a day's fun.

On the 24th of May the men would go out and cut young trees that had just leafed and line both sides of main street with them. This avenue of trees served as part of the decoration for sports day.

The old sports grounds had a lovely bluff of trees, which was later burned much to Peggy Martin's distress. There a good number of the citizens from Kelly Lake and surrounding communities would pitch their teepees and camp for the occasion. This was really a thrilling time for all the young people.

I can also remember going to John Pfaus and buying three loaves of freshly baked bread for 25 cents and a very large bag of maple buds for five cents from Griff Adams.

In later years my brother Harold and I with some of the Bond kids used to carry milk from the Prowd's farm and deliver it in town for the outrageous price of eight cents a quart.

I went to high school in Beaverlodge attending various classes in the old Legion hall and the Victory hall. We were waiting for the completion of the community centre basement which was to house the high school. The old halls were very cold and poorly lit so we were very happy when it came time to move.

#### CLAUDE MORSE

The Morse family has been involved in two fires. The first concerned the blacksmith-welding shop which they bought from Hans Brudwold. It was a bit ramshackle but it did provide a comfortable living. The principal loss, however, was an enlarged photograph of their former big steamer-thresher outfit with 20 teams, all done up prairie style.

With the aid of friends they were able to rebuild but



about two years later a short circuit in a car started a blaze long to be remembered in Beaverlodge.

Claude was born in Minnesota and married Lottie Ellis of Iowa. In 1905 they moved to Palmer, Saskatchewan, near Gravelbourg. There they farmed in a big way but moved on to Beaverlodge in 1939. Claude died in 1945 and Lottie in 1958 after returning to the United States and re-marrying.

Sons Ron and Arland were in partnership with Claude in Beaverlodge. Ron married Margaret Grey. After the second fire he started a repair shop in Huston, B.C. Arland married Joe (Eleanor) Hodges and is foreman in a hydro-electric plant in Prince George. Alice married Jonas Webber. Joyce and Thora married Joe and Charles Shobert, respectively, beekeepers at Doe River. Charles and Thora are now retired in Summerland, B.C. and are living in the same autocourt as John and Lenabelle Johnson. Leroy is an aeroplane mechanic in the U.S. Airforce. Verna married Ken Koebel of Hazelmere. He was in a copper mine at Merritt but later transferred to a new mine at McLeese Lake as foreman. Lillian married Les Haller, also in a copper mine at Merritt and Thelma married Percy Wynia of Gravelbourg.

#### MYRON AND MARJORIE OLSENBERG

Tall and lanky, Myron Olsenberg comes by the nickname of "Slim" quite honestly. "Slim" he may be to the man on the street but to his wife he's "Myron"!

Slim was born in Camrose, Alberta the eldest son of Swedish mother, Ruth Munson and Norwegian father, Olaf Olsenberg. His mother came to Camrose from Iowa and her family's claim to fame was that the town of Camrose was built on Munson property. Father Olsenberg arrived in the States in 1904 and a few years later he too found himself in Alberta. Slim has a sister Rhoda in Washington and a brother Allan in Robson, B.C.

Slim took his schooling in Camrose. At an early age necessity and ambition had him pitting his youth and brains against a competitive world. As soon as he was able he was wheeling trucks for freighters around Camrose, and between Camrose and Calgary. During the war years he was in a war plant at Calgary.

He started trucking with his own truck on the Alaska Highway in 1942. He stayed with that until the Government started gravelling the highway from Wembley to the Richmond Hill and paving the airport. He put his truck on that gravel haul in 1944. In the winter he hauled lumber from across the Wapiti to Wembley. In 1945 he came to Beaverlodge where he took over the B.A. bulk sales from Wallace Edgar. To this he added a trucking service to the community — grain hauling, cattle or what-have-you. His next move was to start a freight line between Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge to haul for the local stores. He was now using three big trucks and a small one.

In 1945 he allowed himself to be introduced to that pert, pretty Thoreson girl who was pitching for the Huallen Girls' Softball team. Zing! Marj let Slim dangle for eight months before she married him but the knot was firmly tied in Grande Prairie on March 9, 1946. Marjorie was the youngest daughter of Idan and

Thilda Thoreson, early settlers in the Lower Beaverlodge district.

When Slim brought Marj to Beaverlodge they first lived in the little house "Granny" Walker has just vacated and since then they have lived in a house behind the garage which Marj didn't enjoy but which "the kids sure did!" She said the boys, Douglas and Allan were always dirty for they played in old cars, on machinery, in grease and in battery acid. When they built their new house up on the corner across from the Elementary school, Doug was just starting school. Marj assures us that having the boys has been one of the great blessings of their lives. "I couldn't vision a home without children," she said.

Einar Loven started working for Slim while he was still in school; after school and on week ends. Except for one year Einar has been with Slim continuously for nearly 30 years.

In 1949 — after the big fire which destroyed the whole block — and after Stan Davis had re-built his garage, Slim and George Davis bought the Davis garage in partnership and took over the John Deere Agency and the Chrysler-Dodge Agency. Slim is surprised to find Davis and Olsenberg will be celebrating a 25th anniversary in 1974.

Ed Hotte is another man who has stood by Slim and George through thick and thin. When Ed first went to work for Davis and Olsenberg as a mechanic's helper, he was also driving a school van for Mt. Saskatoon pupils. One day when it was too cold to leave the horses outside, Ed stabled them in the garage. Ed has been with Davis and Olsenberg through his apprenticeship and then as a mechanic until his retirement in 1973.

Asked what changes he had seen Slim recalled the time when they used to order parts by mail — now its with photo-phone. He remembers cars priced at \$1,700 in 1949 but in 1974 selling for \$5,000, and tractors for \$1,500 in 1949 and are currently \$15,000. Davis and Olsenberg started with two employees besides themselves — Frank Anderson and Ed Hotte. Now they have 11 full-time employees, 2 part-time and casual labor to help set up machinery.

Slim is a public spirited, community minded man who has served with the Elks for 25 years and was Exalted Ruler at one time. He has served on the Fire Department, with the Chamber of Commerce, on the Town Council for ten years and was the Beaverlodge representative on the Grande Prairie Auxiliary Hospital Board and Grand Spirit Foundation. To offset these commitments Slim finds relaxation in sports of all kinds — hockey, baseball, football — more as a spectator than a participator but completely involved wherever possible. Another way Slim finds to relax is spending a day picking roots on the farm — just to get away from the business for awhile. To a lot of people who meet Slim in the garage he may seem a busy, brusque business man but to those who really know him he is thoughtful and generous to a fault. He cares little for the amenities of life and will bend over-backwards to do a favor for anyone. One man of the cloth was heard to say, "Slim Olsenberg is the best Christian in town".



Doug and Allan are the Olsenbergs's chosen children. Doug was born in 1950 and Allan in 1952. They have both taken their schooling in Beaverlodge, both gone to the United Church Sunday School and belonged to the Cadets. In Cadets one summer they both took honors and another time Allan received the top athlete award at Camp Clear Lake, Manitoba. Doug has been a leader with Cadets in Beaverlodge and has taught Sunday School after graduating from Senior Sunday School himself.

In 1963 the Olsenbergs were caring for Mrs. Thorsen and for Allan who has having a bout with rheumatic fever. They were also building a duplex apartment house — with no intention of living in it themselves. But Allan was unable to use his basement room and mother Thoreson needed more room so they sold their house and moved into the duplex in 1964. They have been there ever since.

Doug married Mavis Fimrite — a Valhalla girl with plenty of pioneering blood (Hartley and Fimrite) in her background. Mavis is a hair dresser by trade and enjoys dress making. She and Doug live in Wembley and have one daughter, Averil. Doug is now working in the parts department of Davis and Olsenberg.

Allan married Erin Field of Grande Prairie, a granddaughter of Jack and Bridget O'Connell of Rio Grande. Allan and Erin are outdoor enthusiasts. Marjorie says that even as a little boy Allan always wanted to go tenting or out to the farm either with a pal or alone. One day recently Marj was going through junk left at the farm shack and came across a pair of boys "engineer" boots. She said she hadn't realized until then how small Allan had been when he went out there alone. Allan has bought the home quarter of Melvin Longson and besides farming that quarter helps with farming for Davis and Olsenberg. Although they are selling off their cattle now the assumption is that they'll be back into cattle when prices look better and Allan has corrals for them at his place.

We can't leave the story without something about Marj — the anchor of the ship. As a girl she led a full and busy life — after finishing school she worked for both Clows and Rotars in the store at Huallen and in the post office while Clows had it. She also looked after the post office for Anne Willsey whenever Anne was away or needed help. Marj also operated the telephone exchange for her mother and says she always enjoyed meeting the public. She was also an active sports woman, pitching for the Huallen Girls' Softball team and playing basketball at sports and picnics all around the districts. She recalled that with the addition of her niece, Doris Romkey, the Thoreson girls could have had a basketball team of their own.

Besides being an excellent homemaker with a creative bent, Marjorie enjoys reading more than eating, though she seldom reads fiction. And her other hobby is Art Appreciation. She claims she can't draw or paint but really enjoys Art Galleries and Exhibitions. She understands what she sees much better than the average woman.

A highlight for Myron and Marjorie was the celebratooon of their 28th wedding anniversary in a most unusual way. On March 9, 1974 in New Zealand a

group of Maori entertainers were alerted to the fact that the Olsenbergs were celebrating. The Maoris drew the Olsenbergs into their act and showed them how to kiss Maori style — Myron being surrounded by Maori girls and Marjorie by Maori men — all of whom had to be kissed. They then sang them a Maori "Song of The Wedding" — and initiated them into a Maori dance. To top this off, when they crossed the International Date Line on their way home they had two days to celebrate their anniversary, (two March 9's).

Golf looms in the future — and more travel.

#### A. S. "RUSTY" OLSON — by Ida Olson

The railroad had not yet reached Beaverlodge when the "Rusty" Olsons arrived from southern Saskatchewan in 1928.

Rusty came in May, bringing a carload of stock and machinery for the late Frank Fordyce. I followed in August with our two oldest children, Evelyn and Harold. Rusty worked on several of the buildings in the present town before we moved to a homestead in the Mountain Trail district. We lived on the homestead for seven years. We moved back to Beaverlodge in 1935. Rusty turned to carpentering and followed this trade until he retired.

Our family are all married: Evelyn to Harry Hogg; Harold to Margaret Clarke and they live in Edmonton; Maxine to George Davis; Irene to Bird Webb, Beaverlodge; Allan to Gloria Armstrong of Hythe, now of Campbell River, B.C.; Ruth to Jack Smith of Hinton Trail and they live in Edmonton; Delbert and his wife Marilyn also live in Edmonton; Eileen married Tony Kombitz from Taber, Alberta and they are now in Brooks. This year, 1974, makes 46 years for us in the Peace and we have never regretted coming.

Ida and Rusty Olson have been ardent community workers. Ida has been very active in most of the womens' organizations, especially in the United Church and the library, and has always carried more than her share of the load. Rusty would never admit to much but the staunch community centre building and many other structures he has worked on are a tribute to his high standards of construction.

#### JOHN AND KATE OSZUST

John Oszust and Kate Kanski first met in Austria, where they attended the same school. Kate recalls that John had brought a willow stick to school as a correctional means and the first one it was used on was John himself. Three months was the only schooling Kate received as they emigrated to Mercer County, North Dakota at that time. A few years later John and his parents followed and he and Kate married in 1906.

Kate recalls that times were very hard in the new land and that there was a shortage of fuel for heat. When she and her five sisters would go for cows each evening they carried sticks and when they came to a pile of droppings would turn it over so it would dry evenly. Later they would take a gunny sack to pasture and carry home the dried chips to be stacked outside the door until needed. A few years later Kate and her two older sisters went to Bismark to find work. Kate took a job babysitting for a family that owned a bakery, for a mere \$5.00 a month plus room and board.





Kate and John Oszust 50th wedding anniversary, 1959.



Four generations of Oszusts, 1964.



Dad, Mum and Mary Oszust, Christmas, 1963.

Some days as a bonus she would receive day-old bakery goods. As young as they were the girls were self supporting and even sent money home. A short time later Kate's mother passed away during childbirth.

Six years after their marriage, Kate and John moved to Oyen, Alberta with two small children, Paul and Josie, both born in Wilton, N.D.

It was here that John first went into the well drilling business. In 1929, with four more children, Alex, Helen, Lawrence and Bernie they moved to Beaverlodge. Once again John went into well drilling and also opened the first plumbing shop in the village. He was usually successful in finding water where others failed.

Kate, also active, was busy earning money to help the family. She raised the largest, firmest cabbages and cauliflower for miles around. Vegetables of all kind were sold by the bag with people exclaiming what a tremendous green thumb she had. Cases and cases of raspberries were exported as far away as Edmonton and large, delicious berries they were. Three times a week she would prepare and bake 14 loaves of bread, plus cream puffs and doughnuts, which she delivered to D'Arcy Gaudin's store to be sold. At that time a loaf



John and Kate Oszust, 1945.

of bread was a mere 10 cents. Not only did her baking and vegetables earn her money but prizes as well. For as many years as she entered her bread at the Oyen and Grande Prairie fall fairs she took first prize.

Her children, grandchildren and many friends will never forget her home-made egg noodles, peroghy, buckwheat sausage, borsche and kobasah. An extra plate was always on the table and coffee in the pot. Hospitality has always been a major asset of Kate's.

In 1963 she mourned the passing of her husband, John but life must still go on and Kate, at the age of 85 still has the coffee pot handy and enjoys reminiscing about old times with visitors in her home.

A major role in her life today is her six children, all of whom are still living. They are: Paul of Edmonton, Josie Cook and Alec of Beaverlodge, Helen Prokerchak of Tacoma, U.S.A., and Lawrence of Vancouver and Bernie of Calgary.

John's ability as a well driller was never doubted and his keen sense of trading made his name almost a by-word in the community. Sometimes it took a little reflection to determine the real meaning, such as his advertisement in the local paper, "Deal with John Oszust, and you will never forget it." Or his oft-quoted remark, "My cheques must be good. Everyone has them." Then there was the time he was called in to tend a faulty well. A tap of the handle did the trick but the owner refused to pay unless an itemized statement was forthcoming. It was promptly presented:

Fixing well .....	\$2.00
Knowing how to fix well .....	40.00
	\$42.00

At a concert in the Legion Hall, John McNaught sized up matters when he was asked to comment on John Oszust. He was thoughtful for a moment and then exclaimed, "John Oszust! WELL! - - - WELL! - - - WELL!"

## PARKS

It goes without saying that in a parkland region there should be plenty of park-like locations. This is particularly true in this locality and one visitor remarked that you could picnic all summer, always in a different, picturesque and beautiful spot.



One community picnic spot is at the Halcourt bridge, known to many. Another was the Bush Lake sportsground where the settlers asked the Game Department to reserve a school section and a fraction of the east end of Bush Lake for community use and potentially as a game reserve. For two or three years the spot was well used. The sandy beach was good for swimming and a pier aided boating. Sunday baseball games were well attended, with visitors from Mountain Trail coming with their team.

About 1927 Hans Hommy donated several acres of land for a park on the banks of the Beaverlodge river and for many years people came from Beaverlodge, Hythe and the surrounding community for picnics and for swimming.

The United Church people of Hythe had church services in the park and afterwards, a lovely lunch was served, and a time of fellowship was enjoyed by all. Many school picnics and Sunday School picnics were held there. The park hasn't been used for many years as people travel longer distances now. Regardless, Hommy Provincial Park is still indicated on highway maps and perhaps some day this pretty spot along the Beaverlodge river will again be popular.

In Hugh Allen's tenure as Minister of Lands and Forests he was aware of the beautiful vista from the top of Saskatoon Mountain, also that some of the land on the slopes was not well suited to agriculture. Thus he had Saskatoon Mountain Park created, somewhat of a twin to beautiful Saskatoon Island Park to the east. An area of some five sections of land were included in the park and the bush and wildlife were protected by regular traverses by caretaker Allan Watson. A picnic shelter was built and the road leading up the hill was improved. It is also interesting that this time those who picnicked at Bush Lake requested the reserve of a narrow corridor between the two properties.

All went well and Saskatoon Mountain Park was well patronized until 1953 when suddenly it was closed to the public and all was hush hush! Soon American armed forces personnel and hosts of construction workers hove in sight and we learned that we would have an Air Base in our midst but we must not talk of it lest the enemy learn!

Perhaps we didn't talk loudly but some did wonder whether an important Air Base might not become an enemy target and Beaverlodge be bombed! To be on the safe side we referred to it in code — the Eagle's Nest and every school boy soon knew that in effect the Air Base was indeed a camouflage and what was really happening was the establishment of a submarine base on the mountain. Surely the enemy would never suspect.

The American personnel were a stern lot and tried to think they were still in California. They had their manuals and were well trained as when one day the security alarm sounded. The enemy were approaching the Air Base atop Mount Saskatoon.

The suspects were surrounded and brought forth for interrogation — Edna Gillard, Daisy Brown and Sadie Baird, three innocents who had been calmly picking high bush cranberries on the west slope of Saskatoon Mountain as had been their wont for several years.

"You were spying on military premises," was the stern accusation.

"No, sir. We were picking berries," was the spirited retort.

Women like Ms. Gillard, Brown and Baird do not admit to a wrong they have not committed. But the Commander had his rule book.

Who gives in?

#### ALFRED AND LILLIAN PINCHBECK

Remember Alf Pinchbeck, the partsman in the Cox-Jewett I.H.C. Agency. He might not recall your name but mention a part number and he could identify it instantly.

Alf was born at Frieston, Lincolnshire, England where his parents worked as groomsman and cook on estates. They came to Strathcona in 1903 when Alf was four years old and farmed at Vermilion and Olds. Alf attended the Vermilion School of Agriculture in 1917 and enlisted in the R.C.A.F. as a mechanic. After the war he returned to the farm, then was an I.H.C. service man out of Battleford. Following this he worked for the Alberta Department of Highways for 14 years. He returned to the I.H.C. at Beaverlodge and Dawson Creek until they retired.

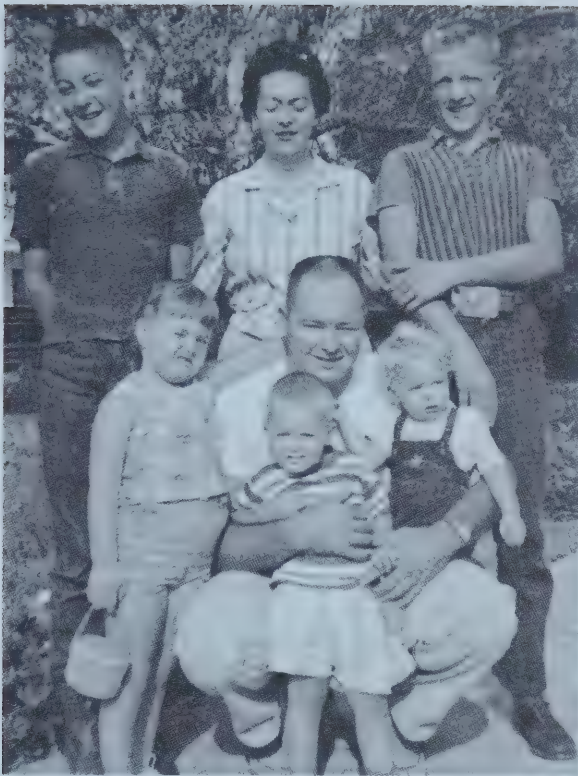
In 1926 Alf married Lillian McNeil of Vermilion — of Scottish ancestry. Lillian was an ardent church worker and enjoyed singing in choral groups. They have one daughter Jean, a former stenographer at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm, married to Don Hocking of Wisconsin. Don served at the U.S. Radar base at Beaverlodge as well as at Fairbanks and various U.S. points. They have two sons — twins Philip and Douglas. Philip is a Bell helicopter instructor and is married to Donna Hollingshead. Douglas served in the navy and is in communications at San Diego.

Alf has two consuming interests — fishing and hunting. Also he has a secret ambition: to once again participate in a plowing match. We may see him in action at Wanham next summer.



Lily and Alf Pinchbeck.





The Hocking family. Phil, Jean, Doug, Lori, Don, Kurt and Linda.

#### **THE PROUD FAMILY — by Mrs. James Proud**

In March 1930 my husband Jim arrived in Beaverlodge with a carload of furniture, a car, farm machinery, a team of horses and some chickens. He had bought a half section of land the previous fall which cornered the town on the northeast. He hired John Butler to build our house. A few months later I arrived with our four daughters: Geraldine, Alona, Kathleen and Jeanette. We had been living at Spokane, Washington after moving from Kerrobert, Saskatchewan two years before.

We found Beaverlodge a very friendly town with a wonderful community spirit. Many ex-teachers lived in and around the town. They contributed to and enriched the social life.

We had excellent teachers and our girls have many pleasant memories of their school days. They all graduated from Beaverlodge high school. Their activities centered around the school and the church with its summer camp at Lake Saskatoon and music festivals in Grande Prairie. They played in an orchestra led by Cephas Tennyson and at church suppers and school entertainments. Incidentally Cephas went east and married for the first time at the age of 90 years. With dancing lessons, the C.G.I.T. and ice skating at the rink they found plenty of entertainment.

I taught music at Beaverlodge for 14 years. Many of my pupils had excellent music ability and received honors in the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto. Some of them have gone on to teaching music.

We lived in Beaverlodge during the depression and

at times money was as scarce as hen's teeth. I remember my husband shipping a cow through the Co-op to Edmonton. Percy Johnson advanced him \$15.00 and said he would receive more later. When we received a letter from the Co-op it contained a dinner for over \$7.00 of the \$15.00 that had been paid.

In spite of hard times we always had a wonderful garden and there were lots of blueberries, saskatoons, and wild strawberries so we had plenty to eat. Later we had a small Jersey dairy.

Geraldine and Alona graduated from U.B.C. in Vancouver. Geraldine became supervisor in the Childrens' Aid Society and Alona is still teaching school. Kathleen and Jeanette went to Normal. Kathleen is still teaching and Jeanette substitutes. The girls are married. Geraldine and Kathleen live in Vancouver and Alona and Jeanette in Victoria.

I taught music near Victoria until my husband passed away 6 years ago.

#### **JOHN PFAU**

John came with his family from Poland to Radisson, Saskatchewan in 1925. There they stayed with relatives until they were able to settle. In 1927 John went to North Battleford where he worked in a bakery until 1935. During this time he also attended a trade school in Calgary to get papers as a Master Baker.

In 1935 he came to Beaverlodge and opened up a bakery and a coffee shop. The site had been used by Mrs. Halliday for a restaurant and later by Mr. Mah. When Mr. Mah moved to the hotel John took over the site for his bakery and coffee shop.

In 1948 the big fire wiped out the block where the bakery was. It was rebuilt and in 1952 John sold to the Wong brothers and moved to Edmonton. There John dealt in real estate and then bought Capital Cleaners which he operated for nine years. This was sold and he moved to Victoria in 1965 where he bought the Royal Victorian Motel.

John and Alma have one daughter Monica. John will be well remembered for his bread donations to the Monkman Pass project.

#### **GEORGE QUERING**

George Cornelius Quering came to the Peace River country about 1927. He worked for Elias Smith in the butcher shop at the old town and in the new town. He served in the army as a butcher. He spent some time in the Veteran's hospital in Edmonton for a war injury.

George started a bottle collection agency, a service to the community and to him as from his earnings he was able to make two trips to his homeland, Germany. In recent years he was the handy man for Gaudin's Store.

George is an excellent linguist and speaks several languages. He is now residing in the Hythe Lodge and enjoys his retirement with cards and bingo.

#### **JENS AND ANDREA RASK**

Hi folks:

You know that Mr. and Mrs. Jens Rask you were asking me about? Well I've been making some inquiries and I do believe they are the ones you used to know at Barrhead. Too bad they're both dead now; you would have liked them!



It seems that they were both Danish. He came to Canada when he was 34 years old but I can't find out when she came. He settled at Mosside and eight years later he married Andrea Andreason, in Edmonton. She had been married before, to a man who worked in a thread mill in Montreal. They had had a son but both her husband and little son died so she was quite alone when she met Jens Rask.

After their marriage they adopted a boy for themselves but he died too. Then they went to Barrhead and looked after a man and his two motherless sons. Jens took a job with the construction crew of the ED and BC railway and when he got as far as Beaverlodge he just stayed here. She didn't come to be with him for a good many years. Seems she felt she was obliged to see these other boys through until such time as they were capable of fending for themselves.

Mr. Rask was a staunch supporter of the United Church and was usually in his pew every Sunday morning. When she came though, she went to the Alliance Church as she said it was the closest thing to her beloved Salvation Army that Beaverlodge had to offer.

When Jens set up his shoe shop and cobbler bench there was only a harness shop in town to tend to people's needs and so his little business was much appreciated in town. Folks hereabouts remembered the stout little man with cherubic smile and bald head. He used to wear black shirts and black pants in the shop and spoke broken English. He retired two years before his death in 1951 and sold his place to Rusty Olson.

Mrs. Rask was much better with the English language than he and was every bit as stout, if not more so. Both she and Jens seemed hungry for company, though it seemed there were folks here who had known them at Mosside — John Wallace, I believe, and Mr. Nicholas the United Church lay preacher that was at Hythe for so long. And lots of people enjoyed them — and they did like to visit.

They tell here that when he died she gave a memorial in his name to the United Church that was to be used for the "tower" fund of the church. When Mrs. Rask was ill before her death Mrs. Heikel was good enough to look after her. She left her money to the Alliance Church. Jens and Andrea are buried side by side in the Beaverlodge cemetery.

#### MEL RAY

Melvin Clayborn Ray, son of George Alex Ray, was born in 1918, the year of the influenza epidemic, in the farm home in the Halcourt district. He was named Clayborn after an uncle on his mother's side.

Mel has tended an elevator for 31 years (in 1973) and during that period he has farmed, 1945-1953, in the Two Rivers district and trucked for 25 years. He is married to Isabelle Martinson. There is a large family. Melba married Brian Peace, an accountant in Edmonton. Lois married Robert O'Dell, an insurance adjuster in Calgary. Rhoda married Raymond D'Aoust, in the heavy equipment business. Collis married Gerald Watson of the Pool Elevator in Grande Prairie. Dennis married Lillian Norton of Grande Prairie, and Cecil presently with the UGG at Nampa, married Dorothy Macklin. Irvine was killed in a car

accident. Norman, Judy, Brenda, Marlow and Darin are in school.

#### THE RED CROSS SOCIETY — by Abbie Adams

Bert Abbott and Walter Bond organized a Red Cross unit in Beaverlodge during the early years of World War II. The Ladies' Auxiliary was very active and the members included Mesdames McDonald, Hill, Emes, Lee, Helmer, Bond, Adams and Andrews. They met once a week in homes. We cut bolts of material into infants' wear, children's and men's pyjamas and made them up. We also knit large numbers of socks and sweaters. Our membership was not large but it was helped tremendously by ladies of the community calling to pick up sewing and work. School children's organizations were also active, assisted by members of the senior unit.

We purchased a cedar chest, filled it with linen, mostly donated. A pale green satin comforter was also included. Cath Robson drew the design for the comforter. In due time it was quilted and was a beautiful article. Raffle tickets were sold, the last being disposed of at the Rio Grande Sports. The winner was an elderly man who lived in a log hut miles across the Wapiti and was reported to have shared his bed with his four dogs.

The Gimle district also had a very active unit. It was independent of ours but it received supplies from us. The ladies used the school house as it was centrally located. They were recognized for the heavy wool quilts they made. These were sent to Edmonton and distributed to bomb-shelter victims. They also worked with school children on various projects and by combined efforts raised several hundred dollars. Two raw wool fleeces were donated to the group and Mrs. Will Hodges and Mrs. Frank Dick undertook the washing and carding of the wool. They took it to the Beaverlodge river, doffed their shoes and stockings, pinned up skirts and waded in. The ladies carded the wool and it was made into quilts.

Not all the activities were recorded in the minutes, such as the Beaverlodge unit collecting a ton or more of newspapers for sale in Dawson Creek as salvage but in the last minute the market disappeared. This left the president with only one alternative, to haul the paper, at his own expense to a depression area south of town. A few years later the Edmonton Highway was built over the spot, so next time you drive to Grande Prairie you may, in fact chance to drive over the Want Ads of the wartime Edmonton Journal.

The unit had another project, to supply oil for the war effort. Bill Adams donated rancid butter from the basement of his store and the ladies rendered it in their kitchens. Finally it was ready for shipping and a trucker was engaged. However, one difficulty remained; the president, an Englishman objected to discuss matters with the trucker until he was formally introduced!

And there were barn dances to raise funds for the Red Cross. All went well at the Heller effort until one lady, feeling no pain, nearly backed her car over the bank of the river. And at Arnold Johnsons, the family took turns after the crowd left to make certain that

stray cigarette butts would not burn the barn. Today, Verne wistfully recalls the collection of beer bottles left around the yard for him to gather up. Today he would call Ken Moon to send over a truck.

#### **BILL AND GRETTA SCHAFFTER**

The old days were good and bad, and times haven't changed much. But perhaps we can take time to salute some who have not withheld their talents.

Bill and Gretta Schaffter were raised on the farm, even as you and I. Gretta became a secretary and in time emerged as the power behind the helm at the Beaverlodge High School where she is parent, counsellor and even nurse at times. Bill graduated from the Vermilion School of Agriculture and became head mechanic at the Research Station, projectionist at the Community Centre, and a member of the Official Board of the United Church.

The girls Margaret and Jacquie had honor standing in High School and were ardent workers in the 4-H movement, winning public speaking top awards. Between times the girls have made their own clothes, played in the Beaverlodge Band and have had large classes of piano pupils. But perhaps their major achievement is their participation several times each in the Canada-Wide Science Fair at centres such as Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Hamilton, Sarnia and Thunder Bay, and their winning of awards many times. Jacquie has been Queen of Grande Prairie International Days celebration featuring her Swiss ancestry costume. Both are attending the University of Alberta and Margie has been accepted into medicine.

Some of us find our time dragging a bit or fail to have an objective. The Schaffters find each day altogether too short.

Gretta is an active member of the U.C.W. of the United Church. This year she was in the Beaverlodge Craft Club and took time out to curl.

The Schaffters have been behind their daughters all the way, whether in 4-H, Sunday School and church, at the swimming pool, in musical events, band practise or building crates for Science Fair exhibits or buying liver to feed the paramecium.

And Bill enjoys keeping mechanical appliances and such around the house and the garage ship shape and running. He is a Lions Club member contributing service to the community.

Who decorates the house: they share it. This really describes the Schaffter household where activities and experiences are shared.

#### **GEORGE K. SLANEY**

George Slaney homesteaded in Manitoba after emigrating from Killarney, Ireland. There he was a neighbour of General Crerar and for a time was the secretary of a rural telephone company.

George came to Beaverlodge in 1930 to become secretary of the village. It was a trying time as new businesses were being set up and people needed direction but George was able to handle it all in his quiet, thoughtful way.

He left late in 1937 after transferring the town books to Doug McFarlane. He retired to a small

fishing settlement up coast from Vancouver. There he obtained his weekly mail and groceries via a patrol boat and spent his days in happy retirement.

#### **PAUL AND JENNIE SAWIN**

Paul Sawin was born in Poland and homesteaded near Reno, Alberta in 1930. He broke 40 acres but in 1936 he went on the section gang of the E.D. & B.C. at Nampa and from there to Roma, Lac La Biche, Mile 168 on the Waterways line, Spurfield and then to Beaverlodge by 1950.

In 1940 Paul married Jennie Hawirko of Vegreville, at Peace River. Her mother was born in Strathcona and her father came from Austria when only seven years old.

The Sawins have one son, Allan, a graduate in Business Administration. Their home in Beaverlodge is always supported by an excellent garden. Their crab apple tree, Osman variety, bears its full load of fruit each year while their Snowcap and Arctic Dawn rosy bloom crabs, creation of the Beaverlodge Research Station are a mass of color in season. Jennie and Paul would be pleased to have you stop and admire the sight.

#### **SPORTS**

Even as early as 1912 when the population of the district would scarcely be over 200 persons Beaverlodge was sports minded. The first sports day was held at Bob Steele's farm on the Beaverlodge river. A baseball team consisting of Bob Steele, Hugh Allen, Billy Pierce, Harry Cranston, Russ Walker, R. Stone, Garnet Truax, Marley Sherk, George Stone and Don Cranston was fielded against all corners. Besides baseball, the day's events included foot races, horse races, basketball for the girls and a "tug-a-war" to end the day. "Heave! Heave! Heave!" still rings in memories. There has been a sports day of some sort every year since, albeit it may not have been held on May 24 due to snow or other varieties of weather.

In 1913 a girls' baseball team was organized with six regular good players and pick-ups to fill out the team. Maud Sherk, the pitcher had a speedy tricky ball and Ruth Johnson who caught for her can vouch for her curve balls, drop balls and slow balls. The coach claimed he had to encourage Maud and Ruth to let the opposing team get hits just to make a good game of it. In a practice game with the men, Russ Walker bragged too loud that he could hit Maud's balls but had to eat his words when she fanned him easily.

1913 was the year the basketball team organized and consisted of Anna and Ruth Johnson, Irene Walton, Maud Sherk and Effie Flint. Appelton formed a team in 1914 and soon Halcourt, Lake Saskatoon and Buffalo Lakes had followed suit so there was lots of competition. In the 1930's a formidable group coached by I. C. Shank consisted of Mary Roberts, Flora, Bertha and Annie Hume, Elvie Ray, Helen Oszust, Mary Brewster, Yukola Pool, Lillian Anderson and Eileen Albright. Occasionally Betty McNaught played with them too. Men's basketball in Beaverlodge got under way the next year.

Foot racing was an athletic event that was very popular and Harry Cranston, Pinky Newgard, Ralph





Basketball teams, Scotty Ray, Hugh Gordon, Austin Willis, Edwin John, Jack Ray, Dave McLennan. Isabel Perry, Jean Lock, Betty McNaught, Chrissie McLennan, Mary Willis.



The Beaverlodge Girls' Basketball team (L) Yukola Pool, Mary Roberts, Eileen Albright, Evelyn Brewster, Flora Hume, Annie Hume, Bertha Hume, Helen Oszust, Elvie Ray, I. C. Shank, coach.



1950 Baseball team—Beaverlodge Royals. Earl Gillard, George Adams, Art Walker, Bill Oakford, Greg Walker, Roy Kochendorfer. Sec. row—Eldon Ray, F. N. Johnson, Bob Hume, Jim Walker, Len Billings. Bat boy—Glen Kochendorfer.



1957 Baseball team—Jim, Art, Greg Walker, Bud Light, Herb Lowe, Sid Nelson, Eldon Ray, Jim Rycroft. Front row—Bob Hume, Jim Roberts, Bill Clarke, Jessie LaGrone, Jack Gaudin, Nick Holowach, Brian Peace. Bat boy—Keith Hume.



Beaverlodge Baseball team, 1930. Herb O'Brien, George Anderson, Ralph Turner, George Vagt, Murray Siddon, Gene Davis, Ed John, Newt Grimmett, Verne Johnson, Ralph Carrell, Bob Hume, Arnold Johnson.



Men's Race, Beaverlodge Sports, 1925. Ed Heller, Pollock, Scotty Ray, Austin Willis.





Curling Winners Grand Aggregate—1937. Verne Johnson, Reg Little, Shorty Hotte, and Ralph Carrell.



Some Beaverlodge curlers in carnival mood. Back row: Jack Cox, Bert Little, Don Little, J. R. Moore, Shorty Hotte. Front row: Ed Loven and Dunc Hume, 1937.



The hockey team, 1933. Alex Ray, Earl McDonald, Bud Ireland, Lloyd Clarke, Don Little, Dunc Dunn, Stan Halliday, Cameron Hume, Lawrence Oszust, Bob Hume and Dunc Hume.



Mrs. Guy Moore's Figure Skating Carnival. Local boys in take-off act.



Tobogganing on Johnson's hill.

Carrell, Ed Heller and Ben Starke used to put on a good show for the spectators.

After Ralph Carrell's arrival at Beaverlodge in 1913, the baseball team procured uniforms, he became captain and coach of the team, and was "Mr. Baseball" at Beaverlodge until his retirement. He played for 27 years but has never lost his enthusiasm for the game. The best team they had was in 1930 when Herb O'Brien was the star pitcher and the following men made up the team — George Anderson, Ralph Turner, George Vagt, Murray Siddons, Gene Davis, Newton Grimmett, Verne Johnson and Ralph Carrell. Bob Hume was bat boy. They didn't lose a tournament all year.

Edwin John coached baseball in the late thirties. In 1946 the Walker boys came to Beaverlodge because as Greg said, "I wanted to play baseball with a good team," and baseball and hockey have been their chief concern ever since. Greg has instigated the Junior leagues of both hockey and baseball and insured a trained personnel to feed into the Beaverlodge Blue Bombers and the Hythe Mustangs. Greg may think he's just teaching the boys the rudiments of the games but spectators are well aware that they have also been



taught sportsmanship and fair play. If there is a "Most Valuable Coach" award Greg would be a consistent winner. There are five Walker boys on the 1974 team — sons and nephews of Greg's.

A two sheet curling rink was built in 1934. Alan B. Elliott was "the guiding spirit" in furthering this effort. Local men went to the woods, cut logs and sawed the lumber. Jack Butler oversaw the construction of the building. The present four sheet rink was built in 1955. It was used without shingles on the roof for the first winter. It wasn't until 1962 that artificial ice was installed. Beaverlodge's 'claim to fame' in the sport of curling came in 1954 when Verne and Percy Johnson, Vernon Hill and Harold Jarvis won the right to represent the Peace River Zone in the Briar event in Edmonton. Never having played on artificial ice before it was a whole new game as far as they were concerned so they were not too surprised to be beaten by Matt Baldwin's rink.

Beaverlodge hockey began its career (1926-27) on out-door rinks, first in the old town where Cliff Stacey's lower garden now flourishes. The Clarke brothers — Wally and Con were the stars in those days along with Ed Barrick and Moore Skelton, Dunc Hume, Stan Andersen, George Tyrrell. Harold Pool, Bert Watson, Buster Fynn and Sam Miller also played. They had no official coach and on occasions Wally Clarke even played for Grande Prairie when they needed a boost. When the town shifted down-hill a rink was built across the track on Jack Butler's property, then later to the unused lot across from Jim Castleman's blacksmith shop. Ask Nick Nasedkin about the "all-out blitz" on nearby wells by hockey members when it came time to build ice and flood it for games. In 1970 a closed in arena was constructed and plans laid for artificial ice.

New additions to the sports field in Beaverlodge have been the Centennial Swimming pool (1967) where youngsters are training and making a name for themselves in Provincial events. The Riverbend Golf Club established in 1962 attracts players from all over the Peace and affords many hours of relaxation. The craze for snowmobiles has created another sports organization, and the pleasure horse enthusiasts have begun a riding club at Beaverlodge. Tennis courts were constructed in 1973.

### THE BEAVERLODGE SCHOOLS

The Beaverlodge School District No. 2341 was organized in the spring of 1910, the first public school in the Grande Prairie district. School was started September 1 with Mrs. C. A. Drake, later Mrs. J. W. Wilkie the teacher. Garnet Truax's scrip shack, a half mile north of the hamlet was used until about May 1, when Mr. Drake's illness necessitated moving the pupils to her home. The first pupils were Clarence Lossing, Effie Flint, Rede Stone Jr., Albert, Clifton and Fred Miller and Ruth, Anna, Pauline and John Johnson. A succeeding teacher, Elizabeth Johnson had a novel experience when a dozen Indians walked into the classroom one morning and sat on the floor. It was their custom in visiting other settlers and possibly they wondered at the meaning of the school procedure.

An hour later, when the understanding teacher served them tea the visitors departed.

In the winter of 1910-11 logs were secured by donation labor and a new building 20' x 30' was built on the corner of Bill Johnson's land, where the McFarlane house now stands. Paul Flint built the desks and as there were no shingles in the district, a sod roof was laid. After several years of service, the building was sold and moved part way up the hill, to be used as a restaurant. Then it served as a church and again as a school. When the new building was first occupied, local enthusiasm rated it "the most modern school in Alberta!"

Consider the problems of the school boards:

January 3, 1910: A meeting was held at the R. C. Lossing residence to discuss the advisability of forming a school district. The decision was favorable. I. E. Gaudin, C. O. Pool, J. M. Miller, Robert Stone and C. A. Drake comprised a committee to consult with the Department of Education.

October 22: The school district was set up, with C. O. Pool, Rede Stone and I. E. Gaudin trustees.

October 29: Mrs. Drake was hired as teacher, at \$50 per month.

December 15: The janitor would be paid 18 cents a day for building fires and sweeping.

January 3, 1911: R. C. Lossing contracted to cut 6 cords of wood at \$1.75 a cord. The new school house would be built of logs, hewed on the inside, have a board, slab and sod roof and be painted with lime inside and outside.

May 2: Accepted an offer from Mr. Drake to use his house until the new school house is completed. Mr. Lossing is to move the school house furniture and outbuildings for \$5.00.

May 24: The tax rate is 6 cents per acre, with a rebate of 5 per cent if paid within 30 days. W. G. Johnson to supervise the construction of the new building at \$3.50 per day. C. O. Pool and Mrs. Drake to be in charge of the school picnic.

December 12: Mrs. Drake is hired for the new term at \$600.

January 2, 1912: Decided to move the bank account from the Bank of Nova Scotia, Edmonton to the Canadian Bank of Commerce at Lake Saskatoon (then known as Beaverlodge).

January 7, 1913: To buy an organ for school use. Charges for the use of the school house will be: church 50 cents, farmers' meetings \$1.00, dances \$2.00, others \$5.00.

January 16, 1916: The offer by the U.F.A. to build a barn on the school grounds was accepted.

January 20, 1915: The bank threatened to take action re repayment of \$175 loan. Decided to insist on the collection of back taxes.

January 17, 1917: The teacher must report any windows broken and to collect 40 cents for each breakage.

April 2, 1922: Sold the old school house for \$40.00 to Homer Wright, who would move it up the hill and use it as a restaurant. Built a frame 2-room school on two acres purchased from W. G. Johnson.

February 20: Decided to pay Dr. A. M. Carlisle \$10.00





The "Brick" school.



Class of 1934—Beaverlodge High School. Miss McGinn, teacher.



Beaverlodge High School, Lewis King, teacher, 1936.



Track Meet at the High School.



High School Initiation.





The Beaverlodge High School Orchestra, 1961. (L) Raymond Sander-son, Fred Archer, Gale McMurray, Edward Bristow, Margaret Walker (R).

for health services, the same as paid the visiting nurse.

July 18, 1928: Decided to teach Grade 12, hence bought the old school back from Homer Wright for the original purchase price. This expansion was partly to aid pupils in neighboring districts and placed a heavy financial burden on the local community.

January 30, 1929: Decided to build a 2-room school in the new townsite, furnace heated and with a temporary room in the basement.

June 24: Rented space in Victory Hall for 2½ months. The rent was \$100 and one cord of wood.

January 18, 1930: Hired Albert Anderson to move the frame school in the Old Town to the new townsite.

It was a happy meeting in Victory Hall on November 29, 1929 to celebrate the opening of the new \$11,000 brick veneer school. The hall was crowded to the doors and photographer Reg Leake took a flashlight photograph of the children assembled on the platform. In the afternoon the trustees and their wives and the teaching staff served tea "in the spacious hallway" of the new school.

Promptly at 8:00 o'clock Chairman W. D. Albright opened the meeting and told of the harmony which prevailed in the district. School secretary C. O. Pool told of building Beaverlodge's first school when there was "no telegraph, no aeroplane and only monthly mail service." Mrs. J. W. Wilkie, the first teacher of the school, reminisced about the early days and told of the regular attendance of those who had to come two and a half miles and never missed a day, even in the coldest weather.

The speakers spoke with pride that this, the third school to be built in Beaverlodge, was "impressive evidence of permanence and progress". The contractors, W. D. Stacey and W. R. Knight shared the pride of the community in the new structure and explained that they had "built character into every feature of it". Chief Inspector G. W. Gorman told the audience that he had been very enthusiastic about it all during the construction period and had counselled electric wiring even though it involved expenditure beyond the debenture funds, and hoped that next year the gas lamps would be replaced by electric light.

The Beaverlodge Women's Institute donated a

piano and books to the value of \$40.00. Dr. J. D. Maclean donated a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica. The Chinese proprietors of the Windsor Cafe donated a special cake, which was auctioned off for \$5.00 and the proceeds were used to buy a picture for the school.

At the conclusion of the evening, the Funnell-Hedman orchestra took over and a dance finished a successful day.

When Miss Monica McGinn was hired in September, 1924, she was required to teach 23 pupils, grades 1 to 9. The next year found several pupils from nearby schools requiring high school training, so Miss McGinn was moved to the log school to teach 22 pupils, grades 8 to 10. This extra expenditure was difficult for the Board to meet and there was talk of consolidation but nothing came of it for a few years. The Board was willing to provide the service and the only recompense was volunteer payments by parents.

Times changed rapidly in the New Town and the pupil load often exceeded the classroom space. At times the overflow was housed in the Victory Hall, the Community Centre and Bentum Hall.

In time the consolidation was accomplished and two fine schools were built, each with additions, and a fleet of busses shuttled into Beaverlodge and between Beaverlodge, Hythe and Wembley. Now it seems unreal that the brick veneer school was abandoned and has since been torn down and replaced by the new United Church building.

#### CEPHAS TENNYSON

Cephas Tennyson was a brother of Mrs. "Colonel" Lyle who came from Owen Sound, Ontario. The name is biblical, meaning a stone. He and a brother had come west to Unity, Saskatchewan where they operated a very large grain farm. Guy Ireland worked for them for a year.

When the Lyles moved to Beaverlodge, Cephas came to see them and the country. He undertook to run a small grocery store in the West End area at Mount Valley. He was here for three years, then sold to Nick Lingarell who in turn sold to Norman Page. While the latter owned it a fire destroyed the building and contents. Mr. Tennyson was well-liked and did well.

He was spoken of as a gracious, perfect gentleman, full of dry humor. He is remembered for his violin and his small orchestra which provided instruction and entertainment for a small group of musicians and their friends in Beaverlodge.

After the Lyle tragedy, Cephas returned to Ontario and later, at the age of 90, married.

#### ERIC TOEWS

Eric and Phyllis Toews have grown up in the Beaverlodge vicinity and share the friendliness of their parents, the Corny Toews and the Sam Larsons. Phyllis now devotes most of her time to raising a small family, Dawn, Robert, Linda and David, but will slip across the street to fill in a teaching vacancy should the telephone ring.

Eric apprenticed at the Calgary Technical School as a plumber, gas fitter and steam fitter and practiced his trade in Beaverlodge for several years. Now he



assists the Northwestern Utilities to bring natural gas to their many customers in Beaverlodge.

The Toews family are active workers in the Beaverlodge Alliance Church.

## ARIE TRIBO

Arie was born in the Kobeliac Poltava province of Ukraine. He is a descendant of Cossack stock who settled there about 150 years ago. At the age of 21 he moved to Dnepopetrovsk, an industrial city of about 1,000,000 people. There he worked in a steel factory until pressed into the Russian Army about the time Poland was split.

During World War II, he was one of the many young men who were pressured by the German Army to move into Germany. He worked for some time for a firm which dealt in cement. During the fall he was one of about 100 men who were transported to Western Germany about 20 kilometers from the Dutch border to harvest the gardens in the towns which had been evacuated in preparation for the American attacks which they expected. A camp was set up in a town which had not yet been evacuated and there he became the unofficial shoemaker and barber. In his spare moments he even became the shoemaker for some of the German citizenry that remained in the town. As payment for his work, they brought cakes and delicacies such as they could spare.

When the American front began to move into West Germany, the laborers were moved ahead of the army. Since all the gasoline and vehicles were used for transportation of troops, the working men walked from town to town and were supported by the farmers along their path.

The American troops were gaining ground behind the German army and one morning, after spending the night in a German city, the laborers found that the German army had moved on without them. Since food is always uppermost in a man's mind, especially when he does not know where his next meal is coming from, they deemed it a stroke of good fortune when one of the men found a well-stocked pantry and kitchen in the cellar of a deserted house. There about 20 of the men set up their little camp and sat to wait for the American troops. They had no idea what the Americans' attitude toward them would be. Two days after they had found this sanctuary, the American troops arrived. Their fears about the Americans were ill-founded, since the soldiers didn't seem to care about the people who had remained in the city.

Since there were no jobs in the city, and because the front was moving east, Arie decided to return to the West German town where he had been unofficial shoemaker. He felt he would be at ease there since he knew some of the town folk. He worked for a farmer near that town and shortly after read a placard admonishing all misplaced citizens of the Communist countries to return to their homeland. According to the poster, many changes had taken place in the Communist countries and even though the war was not yet over. It claimed that life would be good for those that returned, particularly those who returned as soon as possible. The words, however, did not move Arie since he had experienced many hardships in his homeland.

At that time he met a man from Holland who said that Holland had returned to a life of peace, and that the Dutch government was not cooperating with Russia. A few days later, he was in Holland.

After living in Holland for a few weeks, he realized he had discovered the true freedom he had searched for. Now all he needed to complete his happiness was a wife. He met Irena Soflarskaya through a mutual friend and in 1945 they exchanged vows in a simple ceremony with a few friends in attendance. For several years Arie worked on farms in the North-West Polder, and in 1951 he, his wife and his two small children emigrated to Canada. The Tribos will always think kindly of the assisted passage to Beaverlodge by Ralph Carrell and Edwin John and their employment on the Edwin John farm for a year. They also recall the visits of immigration officials to inquire into their welfare in a new country.

Arie worked on the construction of the Radar Station and since 1953 has worked with Paul Sawin on the NAR Section. Besides a house in Beaverlodge, he bought a bush farm on the east slope of Saskatoon Mountain and has cleared about 150 acres on it. Thus he has been a permanent resident of Beaverlodge for 20 years in contrast to the 33 times he moved in Europe.

There are five children. Katy, born in Holland was married to Frank Heck of Freidenstal who died in 1973. Annie is a teacher specializing in language and literature and has taken special training in drama at Charlottetown. Donna is married to Jurgen Kaut of Grande Prairie and she and Jurgen both graduated in 1973. Nicky and Johnny are both going to school.

Family talents express themselves in various ways, such as Mrs. Tribo bidding somewhat mischievously on an old tractor at an auction sale and thus becoming its owner. But no matter, Arie had special training in motor maintenance in Europe and now the tractor is sheathed in smiles. Another expression of Arie's talent is seen in his hand-made balalaika, the fourth he has made. From it come the songs of the Ukraine under Arie's masterful touch.

But there are wistful memories of the collectivization. Arie's father had been well set up with an 18-acre farm. Then government agents moved in and by the spring of 1933 his grandfather, father, sister and brother had died of starvation. His mother was among 1800 people in a trainload sent to Siberia in cattle cars in midwinter. Presumably she went to Siberia because she had avowed her belief in God. From the end of steel they were marched or prodded 140 kilometers in 40 below zero weather through three feet of snow. The trek took three days and nights and only 200 persons survived. They were then forced to build whatever shelters they could and begin to cut the timber in the vicinity to be stacked and later shipped to various parts of Russia. There was some food to eat at their destination but no vegetables, so that spring Arie's mother found a small patch of good soil and soon had the semblance of a garden. The authorities must have been impressed because after two years at this camp they took her to an Experimental Farm near Moscow where she worked for another two years.

But there were more trials ahead. She was then



sent to Prorva, a small island in the Caspian Sea just east of the Black Sea. Because the prisoners were on an island, there were no guards as such, since there was no way to leave the island. There was no water to drink, but she lived for four days on a small supply she had hidden in her clothes on the advice of the boat's crew. There was, however, plenty of fish to eat since the small island's main source of livelihood was catching fish. Finally, his mother was reduced to drinking the salt water. The hospital on the island was a hospital in name only since it only had beds in it on which a dying person could repose and await death. Rather than admit defeat, his mother decided to get fresh water by dragging her clothes over the grass in the early morning and wring the dew from her clothing to sustain her. It was on one such search for water that she came upon the Asiatic people known as Karsaks. Because she was a prisoner and because the Karsaks had been warned about helping the prisoners, she begged from door to door until one man and his family had compassion on her and gave her enough water and food a day to combat the dysentery which had weakened her.

When the winter snows came, she returned to the camp set up for the prisoners. They were now able not only to melt the snow and ice for immediate use but also to store enough for the summer to come. The next year she became housekeeper to the prison warden and there she remained until he died about a year later. Then she was given a milk cow to tend until she was finally allowed to go home. She was released only on the condition that she would not tell of her suffering. She was an intensely religious person and credited her faith in God for bringing her through her ordeals.

It will be recalled that at the time Arie's mother was taken to Siberia, the grandfather and five children were still at home; their father had fled to the city since it was rumoured that he too would be taken to Siberia. Arie was the oldest boy at that time — he was fourteen. The authorities now demanded 500 rubles as taxes and when the payment was made there was a further demand for another 300 rubles. Arie recognized the familiar pattern used by the authorities to take over other property and because he did not have enough money he could not fulfill the second request. The house was then stripped of furniture as in "Fiddler on the Roof" and three families were forced to move into one house. Arie recalls that the family existed on stray vegetables and when these could not be found, they traced down mice trails to steal the winter horde of corn. When all these methods had depleted the food supply, they gave up hope and literally lay down to die.

Arie says that at this time he had a dream in which he heard these words distinctly, "See, you're going to die. But you don't have to die; you can live." He arose and went directly to his uncle's home, nine kilometers away. There he shared a humble meal and his uncle told him that although there was little he could do to help his young nephew, he could give him some practical advice. "If you wish to survive this famine" he urged, "you must steal." Thereupon, he gave Arie twelve potatoes and sent him home. At home, Arie told his sister to fix something to eat and prodded the fam-

ily into mobility telling them that they had much to do. All the children eventually rose, but their grandfather remained lying on the makeshift cot and there he died.

Their fight for survival took them to a grist mill as part of a gang of similarly enlightened youth. When a laborer emerged from the mill with a load of sunflower mealcake, the children, numbering about 50, were prepared. The man had tied the mealcake under a tarpaulin and a second man sat on the load cracking a whip to protect the food. The children finally dislodged and stole a 25-pound cake of the meal. This they found highly palatable. The next night some of them entered the mill through a small window and stole 35 more mealcakes which with the occasional fish they caught, nourished their hunger. Several months later, in the spring, when their horde of food was depleted, they returned to the mill for the third time. This time, however, there were several armed guards. Although they were afraid, their hunger made them daring. In this attempt, Arie's brother was wounded in the leg. That put an end to the grist mill as a food supply. They tried various other methods to stave off their hunger. For instance, one time they found seven nests of seagulls' eggs and this encouraged them to search the area for more.

Their mother finally arrived home after serving seven years of an eleven year sentence. After the 'hungry years', Arie and his brother worked on collectives, and his sisters went to work in the cities. Later, as was mentioned earlier Arie also went to the city to work.

The Tribos are now Canadians and can scarcely think that times could have been so severe. They have worked every day in their new country and have prospered. They are always willing to help anyone. As this interview ended, friends from next door brought in a beautiful bouquet of peonies.

#### IRENA TRIBO.

Irena Soflarskaya was born in Troyan, Dnepopetrovsk, Ukraine on June 12, 1922. Although she was born in Ukraine, her national origin was Bulgaria since her grandfather had earlier emigrated from Bulgaria. She was a twin born into a family which already had four other sets of twins. The myth that twins somehow lack the vitality and ambition that single children have certainly does not apply to her as many of her friends and neighbours will affirm. Without this strength and energy, she probably would not be living the life of peace and contentment she now enjoys, for her life before she came to Canada was tumultuous, adventurous and often filled with hardship and danger.

When she was only in grade four, she began to feel the suffering which the dictatorial government imposed. The fact that Russian became the official language affected her as only an ignorance of a second tongue can affect anyone, and her grades began to show it. However, this was a minor worry since 1932 and 1933 were the years of rampant hunger in Ukraine. Kalinka, her 15 year old sister and Gregory, then 17 years old, both died of hunger. At this time she also recalls that her Uncle Stephan, who was in the White Army in World War I was arrested, presumably as a



political prisoner. He was sent to a prison in Irkutsk which is located in Siberia. His wife, Irena's Aunt Olga and his three children, Nadia, Olga and Stephan were left to fend for themselves as best they could. Olga, the youngest, was a beautiful golden haired child with blue eyes and was a particular favorite of her grandmother. One day a Russian high official and his wife saw Olga with her mother and grandmother. He asked if he could buy her. Times were hard, and without a man, survival was almost impossible. In desperation Aunt Olga turned to the grandmother to make the decision that any mother would be loath to make. The grandmother, putting aside all sentimentality, chose the practical course. "At least," she told her heartbroken daughter, "There would be a greater chance for her to live through this." Thus Olga went with the Russian and his wife and Aunt Olga was 200 rubles richer. The grandmother, even though she knew she had done the only practical thing pined for the little girl and within the year she died from sorrow or hunger; one can only venture to guess her anguish.

If it had not been for her brother, Nikolai, and her father who worked as a blacksmith and continued to provide for his family as well as he could, Irena claims that she would surely have joined her less fortunate relatives. Nikolai, besides being her brother was her dearest friend. They stole together when their father could not provide enough food, wept together often and so they lived.

After the hungry years, life became more normal and for two years they recovered from the hard times and worked to re-build a decent life. However, the relative calm ended. At the time, Nikolai was completing his studies in the Arts at the University of Preslav. Since his studies were soon to be completed, he wished to donate some of his art to the University. He chose to paint the four famous founders of Communism, Marx, Lenin, Engels and Stalin, and present them to the University on May 1st, Russia's Labour Day. When the painting was completed after months of painstaking work, he locked them in what he thought was a safe place. However, somebody got to the painting before he had the chance to make the presentation. One day as he passed through the rotunda of one of the buildings, he saw his painting hanging on the wall. It was not enough that it had been stolen; the culprit had glued the painting crazily to the wall at an angle. In rage he thought that surely someone was making a mockery of it and thus he tore it off the wall without thinking. There was a witness, the same man that he later found had taken it to make a fool of him, and so with the scraps of torn paper, Nikolai was turned over to the NKVD. Nikolai was put in prison for six months to await trial. Ten days before the trial, his father was called to take him home and prepare him for trial. His father was warned that any further offenses Nikolai might commit in those ten days would be on his head. And so Nikolai came home again, not the ardent and enthusiastic student but a mere ghost of a man. He was covered with scabs (*korosta*) caused by the filthy conditions in the prison, which happened to be Irkutsk, where four years earlier his Uncle Stephan had been sent. Nikolai said later that he had seen his uncle but had not spoken to him, however, his uncle



Irena Tribo, her twin sister Annie and her brother Nikolai, taken in the Ukraine, June 18, 1942 when Irena was leaving for Germany.

had shown him a sign to indicate that he was to be hanged.

Irena's parents prepared Nikolai for the trial. He was sent to a doctor and his disease was diagnosed and treated. After four days, the scabs disappeared. Her mother, hoping for the best but preparing for the worst, dried bread and put it in a sack so her son would not be hungry if he was found guilty.

On December 1st, 1936 he travelled with his father to Dnepopetrovsk and the next day they went to court. The case against him was presented and when it was time for the defense attorney to speak, he asked only that they let Nikolai speak for himself. Irena does not know the details of his speech, she only knows that after three hours, he had won the jury, comprised solely of NKVD and sympathizers of the secret police, and they called for his release. He then asked if he could go once more through the doors where he had spent six months despite his innocence, and he was allowed to say good-bye to the men who were within the walls and had become his friends. He gave them the only gift he had — the sack of dried bread.

After Nikolai's release Irena went on to higher school and spent ten additional months studying to be a lab technician in a dairy. She worked in the dairy for only three months after her course was completed when her life was again disrupted. At this time, June 1939, the German Army was pushing through the province of Dnepopetrovsk after an abortive attempt to reach Moscow. Their road of retreat was clearly





The Tribo family. (L) Irena, Annie, Johnny, Nickie, Donna, Ari (R), 1965. Katie absent.

marked since they ravaged and destroyed the towns and villages in their path. Besides the destruction, there was the dreaded mobilization. Every young, able-bodied and single man and woman was put through a rigorous medical examination. Only the very strong and capable were to go with the retreating troops. Although several members of her family, as well as Irena, were inspected, only she was chosen.

The 'chosen' were instructed to bring only a knapsack to contain their belongings and after a wait of two days in a special camp, 2000 men and women from the province were loaded into cattle cars with straw-covered floors. Each car contained as many as 50 people.

The train left from Berdansk and Irena's brother, Nikolai, her father and her twin sister, Annie, who lived in Berdansk, came to see her off. Her mother was too ill to make the 20 kilometer trip from Troyan to Berdansk. The mobilization took place in June which is harvest time in Ukraine, and Irena recalls vividly her father, sister and brother standing in waist-high wheat waving until they were mere specks in the distance. To this day she has not seen them.

For a week the train made its way across the steppes of Ukraine making one major stop in Warsaw, Poland to delouse the "Russians" as they were referred to. Once they reached the German border several of the cars were unhitched at each stop. No one knew where they would end up and speculation ran high as to their destiny. To drown their fears, they sang late into the nights.

One night the train stopped and the doors of their car were thrown open. They were herded into a barn-like structure and there they spent their first night in relative peace and quiet after the seven days of jostling back and forth in the cattle cars.

The next day they were sent to showers and given their uniforms, navy blue and white striped overalls and jackets with the OST sign stitched onto the front and back of the uniform to designate that they were Russian prisoners.

They found that they were part of a gang which would work the August Victoria Coal Mine located in Reklenhous Marll Huls. The mine was in operation 24 hours a day and the 250 prisoners in Irena's "lager" worked in shifts of eight hours. The work was steady

and heavy, however, the accommodation was reasonably clean, and they were well-fed. On Sundays, everyone rested. This was the day that the "Russians" were allowed eight hours of freedom to wander around the city. As insurance that there would be no escapes, ten people were given a common pass. If one was missing, the others would be punished. Irena had nursed the idea of escape since she had arrived in Reklenhous and she saw the Sunday excursions as her only chance. With this idea in mind, she had saved the soap which was rationed to the prisoners and sold the coveted luxury to German women. In time she accumulated 20 marks. She had also learned enough German to get by. And so one Sunday in mid-August, about one and a half years after her arrival, she put on two sets of clothing, everything she owned, and informed the girls that she was planning to run. As a final precaution she tore off the OST which would certainly condemn her and bought a ticket to the end of the line with her 20 marks. As she boarded the bus, she hoped she looked like a tourist. Since no one questioned her or even looked at her, she relaxed and so watched the countryside pass by. At nine p.m. she arrived at the end of the line, Bochom. As she stepped off the bus, the smell of freedom filled her and inwardly she exulted. Surely they would never find her here in the middle of nowhere. Two Gestapo standing near the door of the terminal belied this, however, and in panic she walked quickly away from the doors of the bus. Obviously they knew whom they were looking for and they arrested her before she could reach the end of the bus.

Thus she was introduced to the infamous Nazi Concentration Camps. The first night she slept on a pallet in a dingy room and in the morning she was awakened by the greeting "Heil Hitler". Every day for the 21 days that she spent there, the Gestapo tried to make her return the greeting. When the butt of a rifle brought negative results, she was beaten with a "plotka" which was a piece of rubber on the end of which a steel marble had been attached. She still bears the scars of her exploit in the camp.

At the end of the 21 days in the camp she was sent to a factory in which bicycle chains were being made. Later she learned that it was in actuality a cover for the manufacture of munitions. And so until August she assembled bullets and rifles in the factory. At this time the Germans were looking for volunteers to go to Holland to build tank traps as a precaution against the arrival of the American Army and Irena, seeing another chance at escape, volunteered.

The third "lager" was well protected by ten layers of barbed wire placed about a foot apart. The barbed wire was raised about six inches off the ground. The prisoners were warned that the camp was surrounded by mines. This, however, did not deter the headstrong Irena.

One stormy night in mid-November, Irena and a friend, Maria made their escape. They were fairly certain that since the night was so inhospitable, the guards would not be as vigilant as usual. With the clothes on their backs and each carrying a long pole, they wriggled on their backs under the ten rows of barbed wire. The oozing mud was a blessing since it made such a venture possible. After they had wriggled



past the wire, they used the poles to poke in the mud and serve as their guide through the mines. God only knows what would have happened had they struck any. Luckily they made it through and so they ran through the storming night to freedom.

By dawn, the rain had stopped and they found themselves in a grove of walnut trees. It was fall and walnuts and leaves covered the ground. They gathered the leaves together and burrowed into the nest of leaves and so they slept. They were awakened by a chant and felt surely this must be heaven. When they peered out of the leaves, they saw men wearing hooded cassocks. On their feet were sandals and they walked in single file along a well-trimmed path. Maria's first exclamation was, "Surely they are prisoners." But no, they were monks. When they stepped out of the shelter, they were approached by one of the monks who spoke to them in German. The monks were sympathetic to the girls and after feeding and delousing them, they found homes where they would be helpful.

From that time until 1943, Irena stayed with various Dutch families who showed her the kindness and hospitality she had not known since she left Berdansk.

In 1943 she entered the convent, but somehow this was not the vocation she was destined to follow for one day one of her friends, Eucharistia Soloshenko, came to visit her and tell her of a young Ukrainian man who was looking for a wife. She was not seriously interested even though Eucharistia was insistent. One way and another Eucharistia made sure that Irena at least met the man. In May 1945 she did marry this same man, Arie Tribo.

For six years Arie and Irena lived in Holland and in 1951 they emigrated to the land of promise, Canada with their two small children, Katy who was four years old and Annie, then two. So with the help of their sponsors, Edwin John and Ralph Carrell, they established themselves in the thriving community of Beaverlodge.

In 1961, 22 years after she had left home, Irena wrote to her family. She had waited this long to write because she feared that the letters might cause more harm than good. She learned that her mother had not survived the war but that her father, who was then 76, was alive and well. Nikolai is the editor of a newspaper in the province of Moldavia, and her twin sister, Annie lives in Zaparozia with her husband and two small boys.

The Tribos now live in Beaverlodge and have a family of five, Johnny (10), Nicky (17), Donna (22), Annie (25), and Katy (28). They are constantly thankful for their good fortune.

#### THE WEATHERUP FAMILY

William and Rachel Weatherup had land north east of Will Holmes on the former Charles Fulton place. Bill was of English descent and Rachel, French. Rachel Labatt had come west to teach the Beaverbrook school. She boarded with the Jordans from whose home she and Bill were married. There are two children, Bill and Amy.

A veteran of World War I, William suffered a fatal heart attack about 1935 while getting out logs.

Amy was about three months old and Billy two years. For a time Rachel and the children lived on the farm, then a year at Halcourt before moving to Beaverlodge.

After Bill and Amy finished high school the family moved to Calgary where the former went to S.A.I.T. and the latter took business training. Amy worked for the R.C.M.P. before taking nurses training. Bill joined the navy. Rachel was a very fine person who helped her children grow into responsible adults. Amy was a very quiet, warm, tender-hearted person. Bill, a sturdy lad, was always willing to help. Beaverlodge remembers them.

#### GREG AND KAY WALKER AND FAMILY

That genial, smiling manager of the I.G.A. grocery store is Greg Walker, youngest son of Arthur and Bessie Walker. He was born in Redwater the town to which his folks emigrated in 1918. He and his brother Art and sister Joan (Wolfe) took their schooling at Redwater. Their father, who was an artist of no mean reputation, died in 1934 when Greg was only 10 years old. In 1942 Greg joined the navy and served for three and one half years.

Kay Solecki was born of Ukrainian parents, Annie and John Solecki in Cranbrook, B.C. but at an early age moved to Vancouver. She met Greg at Redwater while she was visiting friends there. Later when Greg was in Vancouver during his stint in the navy he looked her up and the romance ripened into marriage in 1944.

The Walkers had friends at Sexsmith whom they occasionally visited and from these visits they came to appreciate the north country. Art came to Beaverlodge several years before Greg and became greatly enthused about the Beaverlodge ball team. Greg who was an ardent ball player was looking for a good team with which to play and Beaverlodge sounded good to him. He took a job clerking in Bill Adams' grocery and hardware store, moved his wife and young son Jerry into the vacated rooms behind the Adams store and became one of Beaverlodge's most dedicated sportsmen.

Fortunately for them the Walkers lived back of the store only for six months so had moved out before the big fire that flared into conflagration, at noon on June 4, 1948. Kay recalls Greg had just put on a clean white shirt to go back to work when the siren wailed and he sped away. The shirt was far from white when that day was over.

Of those early days of their marriage Kay remembers that the going was pretty rough on Greg's small pay but he was happy to be able to "play on a good team". And they were also happy to add son Ken to their family in 1948. Kay remembers how she had been told by Greg's mother that even though times were hard she had been able to feed her family of four on 25 cents worth of steak — for three growing children.

Greg's mother, Bessie Walker followed her family to Beaverlodge in 1950 a few years after Greg came — Joan and Art being here too — she worked in the Beaverlodge Hospital for a few years then became an institution herself after she had worked 15 years in Doug McFarlanes Real Estate and Insurance Agency.



She worked two more years for Rays. Everyone appreciated Mrs. Walker's cheerful disposition and genuine concern in the office. When she retired in 1968 from public service she was "Grannie" Walker to more than half of the town's population being thought of only with love and affection.

In 1952 Greg and Kay added another player to their home team — son Brian. Greg was by now completely immersed in hockey with the Hythe Mustangs and hard ball with the Beaverlodge Royals. With the Mustangs he played goal. The team as he remembers it at that time were George Adams, Bud Light, Harley Patterson, Jack and Bill Oakford, Eldon Shail, Jack Gaudin, Bird Webb, Donald and Bob Pearson and of course Greg Walker. In summer Greg played ball even more enthusiastically than hockey. Brother Art and cousin Jim also played ball. Lest it might be feared that Kay was a "stay-at-home, left-out-wife" let it be stated clearly that Kay was an avid fan of her husband and sons and followed them to all games whether hockey or baseball. If ever a man had his wife's support and blessing it was Greg Walker.

Greg reminisced about the ball team and the fun they had together when Bob Hume was coach and manager. Art, Jim and Greg Walker, Einar and Warner Loven, Cameron Hume, Bud Light, Bird Webb, Sid Nelson, Eldon Ray, Eldon Shail, Bob Laurie, Jack Gaudin, Bill Clark, Larry Harmata and Brian Peace were among the players. When they went to play Fairview or tournaments afield it became a family outing and a gala event. They took tents, camping gear — beer, steaks, kids and wives and had a grand time. "Not much like now," he said. "where nobody wants to play in the middle of the week, and crowds don't turn out to see a game anymore."

He remembered one trip to Fairview when the Peace River was high. The first few carloads of players got across alright. On the second trip Bob Hume, Art Walker, Bob Light and Bird Webb were stranded on the ferry with all their equipment and the wives, for eight hours before the ferry could dock. The rest of the team went on to Fairview and by borrowing equipment and pressing their drivers into playing for them they were able to win the game. Kay smiled about the discomfort caused by the lack of bathroom facilities on the ferry that caused the boys so much embarrassment.

Another event that will long be remembered in the annals of Beaverlodge baseball was the time Warner Loven was struck by lightning while playing a Sunday game in Beaverlodge. A sudden thunder and lightning storm sent Greg scuttling out onto the diamond to rescue equipment when lightning struck Warner coming in from out field. It burned his glasses, welded the zipper on his uniform, ripped the sneakers off his feet and left him in a heap face down on the ground. Dr. Young was on the field in a matter of seconds to give Warner attention and had him in the hospital minutes later. Rumor has it that Warner still has that uniform and pair of sneakers hanging in his rumpus room.

Bill Adams rebuilt his store after the big fire but because of ill health was unable to carry on for long. In 1954 he sold the store to Don Macdonald, George Adams and Greg Walker. George wasn't happy in the

store and he sold his share to George Tews. In 1966 this partnership sold the building to Rand Calvert for a Macleod store and they built a larger more modern store across the street. Business has been flourishing ever since. Greg says the partnership has worked well for 20 years and he doesn't anticipate any change. Any change that took Greg's smiling courtesy from behind the check-out counter would be Beaverlodge's loss.

Greg played ball for Beaverlodge for 14 years and hockey for 12. In that time his own boys were growing up. In 1957, Greg, Jack Gaudin and Frank Smith of the R.C.M.P. coached Little League hockey and baseball — the league consisting of teams from La Glace, Valhalla, Hythe and Beaverlodge. Mostly they were boys from three or four interested families. During the first few years parent co-operation was good but fell off as other activities interfered. Grandpa Lee was one of their staunchest supporters and was available with his car for transportation to all the games — albeit he generally got stuck somewhere on each trip. Greg said their car and Lee's were their only means of transportation and after he got his station wagon they didn't ask Grandpa so often. "Some darned good players came out of those little leagues too," Greg said and cited Alan Rycroft who is with Cleveland of the World Hockey association and who played at Macon, Georgia in 1973. And their own two boys Brian and Jerry. Jerry played Junior Hockey with Estevan, Saskatchewan for three years and although he has had plenty of opportunities to go on up the ladder of hockey fame he just says, "No!" He says he doesn't like the rat race. Brian is with the Pittsburgh Penguins — played in Fort Wayne in 1972, but was unable to play in 1973 because of a car accident. This year (1974) he will be going to a hockey school in Prince George in July before rejoining his club. In the meantime he and Jerry keep in shape playing ball. Other boys who got their start in the Little League are Lyman Haakstad, the Patterson boys, Gordon Funnell, Jimmy Oszust, Jim Dyrkach, Barry Ray, Dale and Robbie Nasedkin, Ken McClymont, Jack Barton and Kenny Walker to name some of the goal getters.

Eight years ago Greg and Kay built a new house which they thought was practically out in the country but which has since been surrounded by neighbors with the same idea. Clarence Goodspeed has retired and Greg misses having Clarence waken him at 5:00 a.m. by warming up his truck. He attributes his early rising habits to Clarence.

Greg has been a dedicated man on the Beaverlodge Sports Day Committee and in the grocery department of the store trips have been awarded for super sales of produce, so many cases — so many points. So far the Beaverlodge I.G.A. has won eight trips and Greg and Kay have been able to go to Hawaii twice and once to the Carribean — trips they have enjoyed immensely — even if Kay can't get used to flying.

Kays says her life is intrinsically tied up with Greg, the boys and their sports. She remembers times when she's had to go to four hockey games in one day — Brian at 9:00 a.m., Kenny at 11:00 a.m. Then all home for a quick bowl of soup so they could be at Jerry's game at 2:00 p.m. and then off with Greg at 8:00 p.m.



Meals often had to take second place to the games and practice schedules.

Asked if she had a hobby, she modestly admitted that she has done some wood-working and some dress making. Their social life is mostly with their associates in the field of sports. She and Greg have done some golfing but Greg's enthusiasm for hockey and ball is all absorbing except at duck hunting time in the fall.

Jerry, their eldest son, is married to Pat Iselmoe of Valhalla and they have one daughter. Jerry is as thoroughly interested in local ball and hockey as his father and his only other bad habit is hunting!

Ken is married to Bernice Harris of Beaverlodge and they have one boy. Ken has worked at the Research Station for the past seven years. He plays ball for the Beaverlodge Royals and hockey for Hythe Mustangs.

Brian the youngest is the boy who is headed for the big time — being as we said before with the Pittsburgh Penguins for the past three years and making a very satisfactory career of his love of sports.

### **JAMES WHYTE**

James Galette Whyte was born in 1867 at Renfrew, Ontario. He spent his early life at Norgate, Manitoba working much of the time as a carpenter in logging camps. He married Susan Ann Mallard of Bancroft, Ontario in 1893 and later took up land in the Kelwood district in Manitoba. In 1928 they came to Beaverlodge to be with their daughter, Georgina (Gina) Cawston. Two other daughters, Mrs. Lillian McGillivray and Mrs. Muriel (Rex) McKone lived in Regina.

Jim was active in helping to build the new town, in particular the United Church. Both he and Mrs. Whyte participated in every way in the church and the community.

Oldtimers in Beaverlodge will recall the Whyte's 60th wedding anniversary, July 3, 1953. They both died in 1955. Susan was a life member of the U.C.W. of the United Church.

Jim had a keen sense of humor. One of his favorite stories concerned two of his logging camp cronies. When the drinks were being poured, one asked for the usual "two fingers." The other bettered him by requesting "two fingers in a wash tub."

### **DR. W. A. YOUNG — by Hazel Young**

In 1941-42 Cy Young was at the Royal Alexandra for his senior internship in medicine. I was nursing at the same hospital, as Hazel Murphy. In March 1942 Dr. L. J. O'Brien called at the hospital to interview interns, asking if any of them would consider coming to the Peace River country to serve Beaverlodge and the surrounding district. It was without medical care — the local doctor had joined the forces. Cy and I did a lot of serious thinking and talking — and finally decided to accept. However our plans were subject to change; — Cy received his call to join the forces. He reported to the officer in charge telling him about the great need of medical care in Beaverlodge and how large the area was. They realized that he could serve there as well as in the Armed Forces.

He finished his internship the end of April and we

were married May 2nd. On May 4th we left Edmonton via the N.A.R. for Beaverlodge. On arrival we were met at the station by Sandy Andrews, Bill Adams and Bob Moore and immediately taken to see the hospital which was not completely finished and had not yet been opened. While waiting for the top floor of the hospital to be finished we stayed in the hotel. We engaged another room for an office.

Our first country call came when Bill Adams told Cy he was needed at the Davis farm. Jerry Davis was very ill. He gave us directions saying where a Jean Davis would meet us and take us from there on — Jean turned out to be Eugene, a man and the Jerry, a woman, Geraldine.

After three weeks of hotel living we moved to the hospital in very comfortable living quarters. Cy used one room for an office where he could do minor surgery but he had to go to the Grande Prairie Hospital for major surgery. When school was finished the need for tonsillectomies started. Cy would remove the tonsils and I would assist. Being sure all was in order he would carry patients out to a car and take them home or to a place in town for them to recover. Inoculations in the country had been neglected so every Wednesday in July and August we took off to Hinton Trail, Elmworth, Rio Grande. Parents brought all the kiddies and we set up shop in the community halls. At the end of six weeks we had all the children from a large area surrounding these points completely immunized with all the necessary shots. It was a great opportunity to meet the country folk and we never forgot the kindness shown us. Each noon we were invited to a home for dinner — those fried chicken dinners with all the fresh vegetables were something else. Also we spent one day a week in Hythe at the district nurse's residence for tonsillectomies and other minor surgery. Mrs. Ken MacDonald's home was used for maternity.

In September the hospital was opened for maternity. Miss Lucas was the first nurse. In June 1942 we moved to the Reg Leake building with office in front and residence in back. I can't remember when the hospital was opened for general use. Dr. Lionel Dobson joined Cy in June 1942. We opened an office in the John John's building and we were there until the big fire and then combined to build with Harold Jarvis and Nick Nasedkin.

Maybe something should be mentioned about transportation. Cy travelled in every mode of transportation including snow plane which was a cabin affair on skis and a propeller at back. One time Merlin Ray was taking him on a country call by horse and sleigh. The horse got stuck and they had a great time getting through the snow.

I wish I could remember all the funny experiences — I could if we were all sitting around just talking. We often did this, but I do remember some calls — one to a bachelors, on driving into the yard there were cats all over the place. They ran up the trees when Cy got close to them. This was bad but on entering the shack it was full of cats too. On another call, when he entered the house there was a tent inside the house — the roof leaked so badly, thus the tent.

The Youngs had a family of three, Maureen (Ring) was born in 1943 and is now married with a family of



Dr. Cy Young. The new doctor about 1943.



Dr. Cy Young, 1959.

three and resides in Courtney, B.C. Bruce was born in 1945 and is stationed at Kingston with the Armed Forces. Terry was born in 1946 and lives in Calgary.

#### "TO CY"

I wonder if you'll ever know,  
Thru all these weary years,  
How many hearts you've helped to heal,  
As you heard their hopes and fears.

Oh, little do you realize,  
No matter how you try,  
That it made a world of difference,  
When "Cy" was standing by.

For so many little children,  
It was "you", said "it's a Boy",  
Then watched our faces light up,  
With that "Special" look of joy.

You've played a very special part,  
And we owe so much to you,  
You've sat and listened to our fears  
With the "right words", you came thru,

And so, dear friend, I'm telling you  
You're a "Very Special Guy"  
Tho' Doc's may come, and Doc's may go  
There'll only be one "Cy".

Pearl Cook

Dr. Cy Young, otherwise William Anglin Young was brought up in the Crow's Nest Pass where his father was an outstanding United Church minister. An outstanding teacher gave him violin lessons and at one time Cy was trying out for a place in the Calgary Symphony orchestra, but he decided on a career in medicine.

In the many years that Cy practised in Beaverlodge he gave his best, whether in medicine, organizing sports or serving as Mayor. No one, no matter how ailing, was known to leave his office without a smile.

#### MOMENTS OF GREATNESS

Today Beaverlodge is just another nice town on the highway west of Grande Prairie. It cannot boast of being a boom town, an end-of-steel town like Wembley and Hythe.

But Beaverlodge has had its moments of greatness. The first was to have Rutabaga Johnson family move in, in 1909 and host virtually everyone for Christmas dinner, even I. V. Macklin from Grande Prairie and Rev. C. F. Hopkins from Lake Saskatoon. It was a gala occasion.

Next was Beaverlodge's annual Sports Day, May 24, 1921. The special event was the appearance of the Spirit River Brass Band — Beaverlodge has always been a band town. It may be mundane to mention the fee \$30 for a day's music. Was this the start of inflation?

Beaverlodge had another good day. Its Centennial Day was one of the best in the entire province. But why trifle? Tell of the time when Professor Richard Eaton brought his University of Alberta Mixed Chorus to Beaverlodge in 1955, some 85 singers of note. Chairman Bob Elliott welcomed the visitors and told them that he and Cathy and Norm McLellan were members of the Mixed Chorus Alumni.

Then to show its genuine appreciation, Beaverlodge took over and entertained the visitors. First, Frank Darby's Beaverlodge Mixed Chorus must sing, and the visitors learned that all the vocal talent did not attend the University. Then the Majorettes, with two-baton Corinne Hotte as star performer. Meantime Bob Elliott had to duck downstairs to change into band costume, for the Beaverlodge Band was to blow its best.

The reeling visitors were herded onto the dance floor, where the pastry cooks were prepared and the square dance carried on, with formal frocks whirling to the patter of stockinged feet.

Want to come to Beaverlodge sometime?

#### MISCELLANY

The townsite of Beaverlodge is well located. The land slopes to the southwest and drainage is no great problem. In its infancy the village lacked sidewalks and culverts but who cared? The mud would dry.

Unfortunately not all the basements were housed in cement and spring flooding could be expected. The occupant of the house at the top northeast corner over by Ralph Carrells had to pump his basement. No problem; the job was done in two hours and the water was on its way, ultimately to the sea.



But next in line was the house down the hill, and the next and the next, so the same lot of water was flushed out all the basements in the village and probably it picked up an accumulation of odors and colors.

Not everyone took it kindly. Tempers flared and neighborhood friendships were strained.

Today, Beaverlodge enjoys acres of hard surfaced streets, sidewalks and culverts and its residents are a happy friendly lot.

Buzz Smith, Jack "Bee" Smith and Jack Gaudin were in semi-serious conversation, designed to keep the talk close to the line of truth but sufficiently errant to maintain their reputation of imaginative interpretation. Buzz had just come in from the Monkman Pass region after his truck had left the road and spilled the load of lumber.

"Do you suppose the lumber will be safe, until I get back there with another truck?"

"Sure enough, Buzz, people out there are honest."

"Well," said Buzz, "Just to make sure I left the truck sitting upside down on the lumber!"

Do you recall when haircuts by Fred Hamel were "three for a dollar"? The only stipulation was that they be spaced two weeks apart, or when Nick Nasedkin was run over by the Beaverlodge Fire Engine, the diminutive affair resting in front of the town office?

Not many communities, Beaverlodge excepted, can boast of its tar and feathering episode. We won't go into the cause, the participation or the satisfaction of husbands-at-large.

History records that the Mounties and Town Constable Jacob Smith knew it was about to happen, but they were not on their beat after midnight.

But the beat was there next morning; outstretched hands of all masculinity inspected for traces of tar.

The recipient remained in town, in defiance it would seem, until one morning when he saw an enraged husband charging through the kitchen of the Windsor Cafe. Departure was sudden. He was last seen approaching the Albright siding, courtesy of the ED and BC tracks.

The identity of the participants remains unknown but it seemed that almost everyone knew the details.

If you were an economist, Charles Stredulinsky of Grande Prairie was a master tailor, well schooled in his art. His customer liked the suit but thought the price a bit high.

"It's just as I told you last time, Mr. Albright. A good suit of clothes has the same value as a good milk cow. When you bought your last suit cows were worth \$75. Now they are selling for \$125."

Whatever your interest in those days you did travel by train on occasion. Our favorite train story tells that the ED & BC passenger train ground to a halt and the passengers wondered whether another section of the track had sunk into the muskeg or if the train crew was gathering wild strawberries for supper.

"No trouble", explained the conductor, "We've just caught up to them cows again".

Town policeman have not always fared well in Beaverlodge. Jacob Smith was on duty one night watching Rex Ireland's livery barn burn when his policeman's hat was "sucked into the fire", or was tossed in when someone jostled the policeman. Another critical time for Jacob when two well-paying "sporting" girls were staying at his Prince Albert hotel. He needed the room rent but the girls could be charged as vagrants!

Another policeman, Jack West also took his duties seriously, as when a one-night girlie show came to town and one of the dancers was charged with violating the law, which read that a woman's clothes must be minimum weight. In court the case dismissed; the clothes weighed slightly in excess of the minimum requirement, with the aid of a couple iron washers sewed into the hems!

Something must be done about it, the woman's temper tantrums were more than he could stand. It was an old story but this time it was too much. The gun was in the corner; murder and suicide would end it all. Murder it was, but the plan went awry. The Police were called in.

The case was tried, informally, in Jim's Barber Shop and there was speculation whether the murderer had lost his nerve, unable to turn the gun on himself. Bill McClymont had a better idea. "When the noise of the gunshot subsided, the shack was serenely quiet, quietude which the murderer had longed for. Now the woman's tongue was silenced and life could be blissful. So, instead of shooting himself he hiked over to the neighbours and phoned the R.C.M.P."

There were few cars in the Old Town and most of them were Model T Fords. Four coils were housed in a little black box beside the steering wheel of the Fords. If there was ignition trouble, the mechanic in the garage just knew the fault lay in one of the coils and that a replacement of the coil could be found in the parts department of the garage, the apple box behind the anvil. If the spare didn't make the car run, replace coil No. 4 with . . . etc.

Finally, the owner could drive away, troubles corrected. Fortunately there was always the spare coil — just one — in the parts department, the errant coil from the last job. By its use neighborhood cars were kept running.





Looking up the hill at the peaceful hamlet of Beaverlodge, 1925.

# BEAVERLODGE OLD TOWN

## JACK ABEL

Those who followed the local stampedes in the early days will recall Jack Abel, a care-free person who would appear from somewhere and delight the crowd with his happy-go-lucky attitude and big smile. He was somewhat swarthy, which suggested, a possible trace of Mexican ancestry.

At first Jack seemed to get bucked off every horse he mounted. He persevered and finally became a top rider and well earned the nickname "The Human Fly".

Then Jack drifted on. Some say he fell into bad company and there was talk of stock rustling. Regardless, early Beaverlodge remembers him as a Stampede Idol.

## AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

In 1912 the Beaverlodge and Lake Saskatoon Agricultural Society was organized and its initial fair was held at Lake Saskatoon that year. The society was very active, holding an excellent fall fair from 1916 to 1931 and a seed fair from 1916 to 1932. No doubt the seed fair contributed greatly to splendid winnings in subsequent years by Herman Trelle and others at the Toronto Royal and the Chicago International Hay and Grain Show.

Charter members included I. E. Gaudin, W. G. Johnson and A. Sherk and Sons. The minutes of 1914

further list Rede Stone as 2nd vice-president, Paul Flint and Charles McNaught as directors and W. D. Albright as honorary director. In 1919, the Beaverlodge neighborhood wanted to be legally free to organize a society of its own when the time should be ripe and the parent society was recognized as the Lake Saskatoon Agricultural Society. When Beaverlodge was called to decide whether or not it wanted a fair the decision was made to urge for a county-wide fair to be held in Grande Prairie.

Early harvesting was done by flails on the barn floors by many early settlers, but Oliver Johnson brought in a "horse powered" machine to handle the 1909 crop. The separator was simple — a man stood at the mouth of the cylinder, cut the bands and fed in the sheaves by hand. The straw, discharged at the other end, had to be hauled away. For power four or five teams of oxen were attached to poles and walked in circles transmitting power to the gears and separator.

Soon this one machine was inadequate for the needs of a growing community so in 1909 the Bull Outfit formed the Beaverlodge Industrial Co. C. O. Pool and Arnold Johnson freighted in the new separator at seven cents per 100 pounds, with six teams of oxen. A portable steamer was rented from Harry Adair. Jim Bauman was the separator man and Billy Johnson the engineer. In the winter of 1910-11, the company brought in its own 20 H.P. portable Case steamer. The outfit was hauled from farm to farm, the run starting in September 1911 just west of Sexsmith and ending in December at a cost of 25 cents a stack. After three years this outfit was sold.

The Grande Prairie Herald of January 6, 1914, reported:



"An auction sale of the threshing machines, charter and appurtenances belonging to the Beaverlodge Industrial was held on Monday, December 29 at Beaverlodge school house. The sale was supposed to be confined to members of the company with a view to keeping the outfit in the neighborhood, but this did not bar outsiders from bidding through members. Bidding was keen and a very satisfactory price of \$1200 cash was realized. The purchaser was A. G. Trelle, Mr. Paul Flint bidding on his behalf.

After the sale was completed the lumber in the shed, the fanning mill and the charter were sold, the latter being secured by I. E. Gaudin on behalf of the Beaverlodge Milling Co. who proposed to bring in a new engine and separator."

In March 31, 1914, the Grande Prairie Herald ran an advertisement:

"Grain Chopping — the Beaverlodge Industrial Company's grist mill on Camp Creek at the town line bridge has opened for a short run of chopping. Parties from a distance may be accommodated with stable room, bunk house and meals at regular rates. Good work promised. Terms cash."

The Bull Outfit was in business. The building had been constructed by Jake and John Stegmeier — the miller hired was 'Mac' Miller. Gordon Cameron hauled water for Happy Fletcher to power the engine and Marley Sherk supplied the wood.

The charter was inclusive, including the right to build railroads and open coal mines. When the building was razed the upper section was moved to Old Beaverlodge, where it was converted into a residence for Mr. and Mrs. Paul Flint and son George. Wm. Russell had retained a section of the bolting cloth until his death.

#### JAMES ALLEN

James Carson Allen was born in New York State, where he and his cousin ran a bar for several years. The cousin was known as "Big Jim". Therefore, his partner became "Little Jim", even though he too, was fairly well built.

Jim was first known locally as a barber in Clairmont and when he settled northeast of Beaverlodge, he practised this trade one day a week in the old town of Beaverlodge.

In 1924 Jim, with Walter Bond, set up a John Deere Agency, a General Motors Agency and a hardware store. In 1929 Jim entered into partnership with Stan Davis in the Allen and Davis Garage, the forerunner of the Davis and Olsenberg Garage.

Jim married Frieda Johnson. They had the misfortune of losing their only child, a daughter, in a house fire in 1924. They returned to the Fraser Valley about 1946 and Frieda now lives in New Westminster.

#### THE C.H. ANDERSON FAMILY

Hank Anderson came to Beaverlodge as a young agriculture graduate fresh from the University of Alberta in April 1939 and commenced work at the Experimental Farm on the hill. That was the year of exceptionally high spring winds and one of his first jobs was to haul straw and assist with the construction of a high fence to protect the newly-seeded cereal test

area from soil drifting. That was also the year of severe red-backed cutworm infestations and he spent many evenings sifting soil for cutworms as an assistant to Dr. Kenneth King, an entomologist from Saskatoon.

Hank spent the summers of 1939 and 1940 at the Experimental Farm and returned to the home farm at Whitelaw or took other work during the off-season. In 1941 he joined the permanent staff at the Farm and in July 1942, he and Margaret Kennedy, a teacher of the Fairview district were married. Hank and Margaret both grew up on farms in the Fairview area, Hank in the Golden Meadow district and Margaret at Waterhole and Green Island. Both completed their high school at Fairview.

Margaret and Hank lived from 1942 to 1951 in the log cottage on the Elias Smith property at the old town-site on the hill. This building had previously served for many years as a maternity hospital. When the Andersons were married, Mr. Smith had the building altered to provide suitable living quarters. Bob Cook came to Hank's aid in those times of short funds and with great ingenuity put together a kitchen table and a corner cupboard in time to greet the new bride. Gaudin's store provided a used wood and coal stove at the low price of \$40.00. The previous owner, Mrs. Bert Little had taken wonderful care of this utility item and it provided warmth and eye appeal for many years.

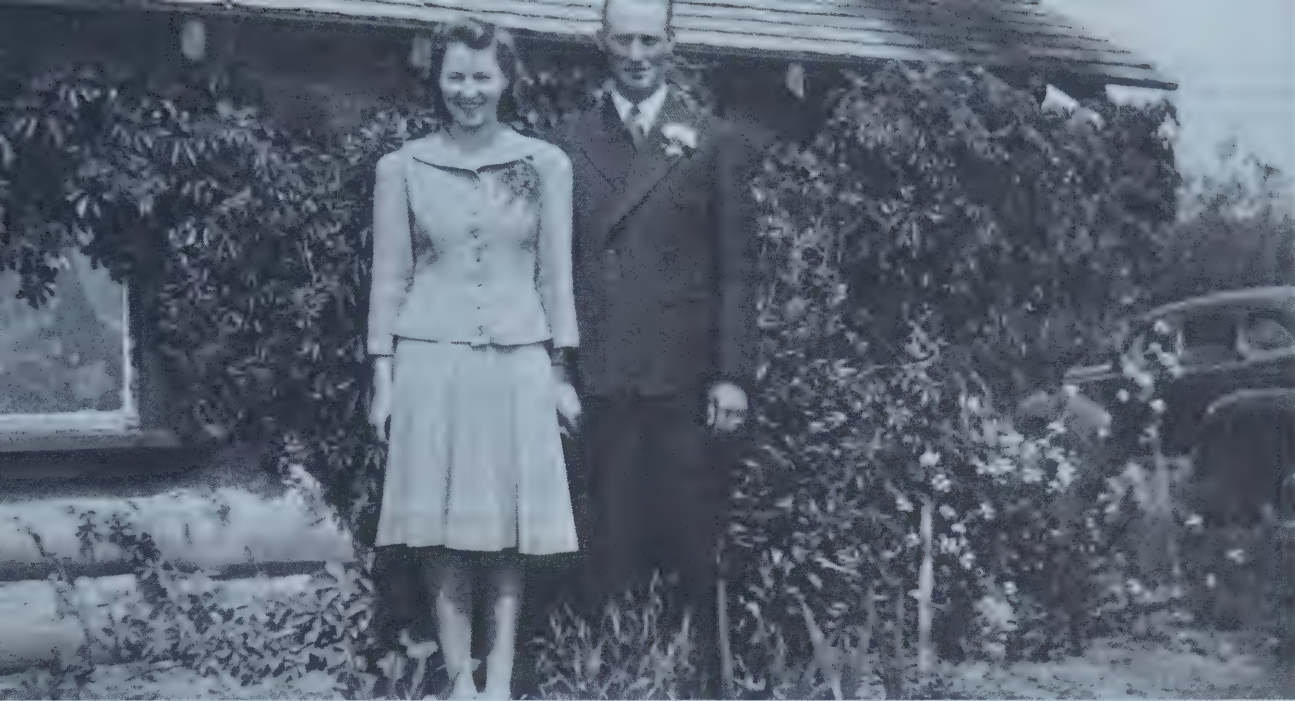
During those years, Mary and Elias Smith provided eggs and vegetables at a modest cost and were fine neighbours in every way.

The Andersons raised a family of five, four of whom were born at Beaverlodge: Karol in 1946, now married to Donald Dabbs and teaching music in the Calgary school system; Donald in 1948, a practising lawyer in Calgary; Bruce in 1951, a teacher of history and art in Saskatchewan; and Kristine in 1953, a graduate in music and pursuing a singing career in London, England. John was born at Fairview in 1963 prior to the family's move to Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

In 1951 the Andersons moved to a residence on the Experimental Farm where they remained until Hank's transfer to the Experimental Farm at Fort Vermilion in December 1956.

During their 15 years as part of the Beaverlodge community, Margaret and Hank were involved with the activities of the town and district. Margaret taught piano and was active in music and drama. She taught in the United Church Sunday School and in 1944 taught grades 1 to 4 in the Beaverlodge Public School. In the winter of 1945 she filled a vacancy at the Dimsdale school travelling to and from Beaverlodge on weekends by train. While there she boarded with the Andy Hudecs on the old Crane-Williams' farm. Meanwhile back at Beaverlodge Hank batched or took meals at Arlene and Jim Stoker's. Hank was interested in sports and as a member of the curling club, assisted with the building of the first two-sheet rink. He served as a member of the United Church board of stewards and for several years as secretary-treasurer. He was a member of the Board of Trade and served two terms as secretary-treasurer. The Andersons recall with





Margaret and Hank Anderson.



Margaret and Hank Anderson with Karol, Donald, Bruce and Kristine, near Saskatoon Mountain.

much pleasure the family gatherings throughout the community and the picnics at Lake Saskatoon, Saskatoon Mountain and the Red Willow. Those were the days when such gatherings resulted in pick-up ball games, swimming, pot luck lunches and happy visiting with friends from town and country.

#### J. A. BEAUDET

Amongst the late-comers to the hamlet of Old Beaverlodge were Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Beaudet. They built a combination store and hotel west of the Victory Hall and drilled a well across the road in anticipation of building a livery barn. The barn never materialized

and neither the store nor the hotel did much business but the management didn't seem concerned.

When the new townsite was established, several buildings were moved down. The Beaudets rejected a bid to move the building by customary means and sought instead to do it the hard way, by stump puller. The Von der Ohe Brothers, from north of town were engaged and the work took virtually all winter, eight feet at a setting. Perhaps the floor was a bit cold at times for Mrs. Beaudet and their small family.

On its new location, the building was mounted on a cement basement, with Beaudet supervising the construction. Sidewalk superintendents warned him to anchor the forms firmly but Beaudet knew better. According to some, the forms spread at the bottom so that eventually the wall was eight inches across the top, and eight feet wide at the bottom. The building is now the Ford Garage and Esdale Gaudin can vouch for this detail.

#### THE BEAVERLODGE NURSERY

##### I. JOHN A. WALLACE

My father, William Wallace was principal of Leeds Coburn High School, Leeds, England, although a Scotsman. My mother was the daughter of a Fifeshire farmer. My father felt that there had been too many generations of city living in our family and had a dream of getting back to the land for the sake of our health; he brought his family to Canada in the spring of 1907. The family then consisted of father, mother, myself aged 6 and an older brother, a younger sister and my mother's sister, Aunt Kate Hutton. We settled on a raw homestead at Campsie, west of Barrhead — 90 miles northwest of Edmonton and proceeded to make a home of this new land, which is still being farmed by my brother and his sons and grandsons.

As I was in delicate health in my younger years and could not handle the rough heavy work of



homesteading, I spent some time helping my mother in the garden. She was a good gardener and encouraged me to develop my interests along these lines. My horticultural endeavours started with planting a border of pretty native flowers along the front of the log shack. In my late teens I became interested, along with my father and brother in testing cereal varieties for the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa and my interest in this work plus my expanding horticultural interest cut into my time for regular farming chores. There were no schools in the area in those early years and my schooling consisted of what my father taught us in the evenings after his day's work. I became an avid reader of farm journals and of Dominion Experimental Farm bulletins, and developed an extensive correspondence on horticultural matters with Dr. W. R. Leslie, Morden Experimental Farm and with Professor George Harcourt of the University of Alberta and to these two gentlemen I owe my horticultural start to a great extent.

In 1935 I started selling some of my fruit and ornamental plants to finance expansion in this line. By 1942 I had developed a fair orchard of hardy fruits and was expecting a fair crop of fruit in 1943 but a plague of rabbits that winter finished that dream. A severe case of grain poisoning at harvest, plus the loss of my orchard, left me very troubled and undecided about the future. In 1943 I applied for, and obtained a position as summer labourer at the Morden Experimental Farm. In the evenings after work and on weekends I made a thorough study of the grounds and orchards. Mr. Frank Hutton, horticulturist, and Mr. Leslie, superintendent, both advised me to apply for a year-round position which was coming up at Morden but I felt strongly attracted to the West and returned when the summer was over, in time to take part in the harvest at home. A second attack of grain poisoning proved to me that the farm was no longer for me.

A letter from Mr. W. D. Albright, superintendent of the Experimental Farm at Beaverlodge made the decision for me. He was badly in need of someone to carry on until the return of the horticulturist, John Moore from overseas and offered me a position. In the spring of 1944, I, my wife and small daughter arrived in Beaverlodge to take up a new way of life. That summer I made a thorough study of the large collection of material growing at the Farm, made notes which I compared with those taken at Morden, and planted a considerable collection of seeds and young plants brought with me from Morden.

Under the direction of Mr. Albright, and encouraged by C. H. Anderson and E. C. Stacey, I made my first speech to a 'field day' crowd that summer and thereafter was a regular speaker on horticultural subjects at field days. I preferred the question periods to the formal speeches, however and made many acquaintances and horticultural friends at these gatherings.

Years earlier, in the Barrhead area I had selected a particularly attractive saskatoon and plants of this were included in the large collection which Mr. Albright had gathered from many sources over the years. We also did work with the Golden currant, which is a beautiful ornamental and a producer of good

fruit but which required selection to increase hardness and fruit size. We did a great deal of variety testing of vegetables, small fruits, tree fruits and all manner of ornamentals. John Moore had started some work on tomato breeding before going overseas and it was my duty to carry on the plots so he would have some basic material to carry on with on his return. This intrigued me and having been used to work pretty well independently all my life, I ran afoul of regulations by doing some breeding work on my own.

In the meantime I had acquired a small parcel of land near the station — I needed room to expand horticulturally. The work at the Farm was proving that many types of fruits and ornamentals were suited to the area but were unavailable in the trade and what they did get did not stand up to our conditions. Having built a house and small greenhouse on my parcel of land, I set about breaking it up and propagating a small quantity of adapted materials — a hobby which later grew into the Beaverlodge Nursery. I had always felt that it was too bad that people tried so hard to grow material often not suited to our conditions and failed to see what was growing in its native state. My interest in all native fruits continued — and when the two first saskatoons were named in 1954, one being my original selection from the Barrhead area we began propagation of this fruit in earnest. We have also improved the pincherry and chokecherry, mostly by selection as well as by some interspecific crossing in the case of the pincherry. We have done likewise with the sandcherry, and the strawberries we favour all have wild blood in their make-up, being the results of breeding projects and the Research Station and in north-central Saskatchewan, where conditions appear to be as difficult as ours.

In the meantime, my wife Gertrude had started to grow a small quantity of bedding plants each spring, replacing them later in the summer with tomatoes for our own use. The nursery was expanding and becoming almost too much to handle after my day's work at the Farm. In hopes of being able to devote more time to this project, I left the Farm and took on a job as Fuller Brush representative, during the summer of 1949. However I found that I discussed much more horticulture than brushes and that I was not cut out to be a high-pressure salesman. I did however, make many good contacts during this summer and built up my first 'nursery mailing list' — besides seeing more of the Peace River country than I had to date. My interest in collecting native material was not in the least diminished and it was on one of my trips over to Peace River that I discovered the Dunvegan Blue creeping juniper, which was to win me an Award of Merit from the Western Canadian Society of Horticulture in 1967. I returned to the Farm that fall, disillusioned with the life of a salesman and having found no more time to spend with my nursery than when working regular hours. During 1949-1951, considerable building was done and there were extensive grounds to be planned and planted and this became one of my duties, along with Dave Mackintosh who was groundsman at the time. John Moore had returned from overseas and assumed the departmental leadership, but he did not remain long before moving to other fields, and again I





The Irene Hamel - John Wallace wedding.

carried on the Horticultural Department until the appointment of Victor Chanasyk in 1950. It was on a plant-hunting trip with him that I discovered the Wapiti juniper, which has also won high praise in horticultural circles.

The nursery kept expanding as the demand for horticultural materials grew. A neighbour from the old home, Fred Morris, who was a carpenter of sorts came up and did some building for us and assisted Gertie in the greenhouse for several years until his health began to fail. In 1952, one of the typists at the Farm, Miss Irene Hamel offered to give me a hand over the busy season and I had a backlog of work due to illness and she had a lively horticultural interest inherited from her mother. This temporary assistance grew into an informal partnership and kept us both busy as the nursery grew. After Victor Chanasyk left for further education, I again carried the department until the appointment of R. E. Harris as horticulturist. By this time the variety testing was being curtailed as many of the projects had run their course. Work with saskatoons and with strawberries was being expanded and much time spent in making tests and selections with these and with tomatoes. My wife's health was beginning to fail, as was that of Mr. Morris and I decided to retire from the Research Station as soon as I reached 60 and became eligible for pension. While it would not be a very great pension, it would permit me to expand the nursery while I still had the health and energy to do it. So in the spring of 1959 I retired — and went to work independently again.

The home plot of land was becoming too small and we began casting around for another plot, which we located on the farm of Norman Hauger, close to the Beaverlodge river. This offered possibilities for irrigation. We found that some plants could be propagated much faster on this type of soil than on the heavy clay at home. We were also fortunate in being able to provide the Department of Highways with good quality clay to build up the new highway, which resulted in a beautiful big dugout in the middle of the property. Lots of irrigation water now — we built our next greenhouse along the banks of this dugout and installed a pressure system for watering. Miss Germaine

Hamel, Irene's sister came to work in the greenhouse in the spring of 1956, developed a liking for the work and became permanent staff. In 1961 a garage which we had converted into living quarters for the girls and office space burned just after spring work. Rather than rebuild in the same spot we decided to move the headquarters to the area of the newer greenhouse and purchased a small house in Beaverlodge which we moved to this location. This served as living quarters and office for quite a while.

While my interest in native material did not decline, opportunity for collection was rare during these years. The nursery was still growing, greenhouses were being added to and my wife's health was gradually worsening, so that we did not get about too much. In 1956, my daughter Shelia graduated from the Beaverlodge High School and went on to St. Joseph's business College in Grande Prairie, and obtained work at Grandview School in Dawson Creek upon completion of her studies. She worked there for several years, then with her savings took a trip to England and France — the result of a dream of travel since she was a small girl.

The only native material collected during this period consisted of a native blue lupin from the Fort Nelson area. This is a very outstanding perennial but we have been unable to find a means of rapid propagation as it is sterile. We also have a fairly hardy form of the Oregon grape collected in the Prince George area and also some native cinquefoil. In 1963 the permanent staff was augmented by the girls' brother Ernest, who has taken on most of the work connected with packaging and shipping and some of the plant propagation, freeing me for the work of propagation and selection of plant material.

The summers of 1968 and 1969 were hectic — besides rapid expansion and weather problems — drought and flood — my daughter developed cancer which proved incurable. She had married on her return from England and was living in Chilliwack. Gertie went down to be with her and help wherever she could — she was herself in a wheelchair, having lost one leg to diabetes. This necessitated several trips to the lower mainland and while some horticultural contacts were made they were not the main purpose of the travels. In 1969 Shelia passed away, to be followed by her mother 10 months later. These years were hard on the nursery — wet weather prevented weeding completely one summer. It became necessary to look elsewhere for land for expansion, with the result that we purchased the Louis Houde farm on the Beaverlodge river. We had been renting part of it for some time and when he decided to move to B.C. we purchased the farm and moved most of our plant propagation to this location. The soil is lighter, makes much more rapid growth, which grows too late in the fall and we are having to return the propagation of fruit trees to the home area to avoid winter kill.

In 1971 Irene and I were married — and set about improving our facilities to be better able to serve our growing numbers of customers. A new house and office complex, including a larger winter greenhouse was built in 1973 and this we hope will enable us to improve our services as well as enjoy its comforts.



And at long last, in 1974 I have been able to fulfil an ambition of long standing — to go plant collecting in the north. We have just returned from a trip to Whitehorse, Dawson City and over the loop into Alaska and back again. We have not decided whether I collected more plants or Irene took more pictures but we hope to have some valuable native material to add to our listings in years to come.

## II. THE HAMELS

Born in the French settlement of Manitoba, we moved to British Columbia at a very young age, where our father hoped to be able to raise enough money working in the mine to return and buy land in Manitoba. However living in boom town conditions in the mid-20's and raising a family was not conducive to amassing any great wealth — the cost of living apparently having been nearly as high as the wages. He did, however eventually get back to the land — working in the bowels of the earth was not to his taste and mother felt 'hemmed in' by the mountains surrounding Kimberley, so at the age of 12 I found myself on a farm in southern Alberta. It was the wrong time to settle in that part of the province, as the 'dirty thirties' dust bowl was at its worst and two cropless (rainless) summers left us with very little of the original savings. An aunt living at Tawatinaw, who had a gift for putting descriptions on paper painted a rosy picture of farming in that area and my parents decided to migrate again. Here there was rain — sometimes too much of it. To a man raised on the deep black soil of the Red River Valley, the rocky grey-wooded soil must have been a great disappointment, but they set to with a will and the first area to take shape was mother's garden. By this time there were eight children ranging in age from three to thirteen, so there were few willing (?) gardeners besides mother. Schooling was three miles away, in a 2-room school with some 60 pupils and there I wrote my Departmentals (Grade 8 in those days), and I decided on a teaching career and completed Grade 9. Teaching ran in our family on both sides but a violent hailstorm followed by a summer frost put an end to several school careers that summer, including mine — temporarily, I hoped.

No matter how scarce the money, there was always enough for a good supply of garden seeds — and one or two new 'glad' corms or dahlia roots and a few flower seeds. Where possible, seeds were saved, roots or cuttings taken and the garden was our mainstay during those years as well as the talk of the neighbourhood. No matter how small the windows, they had houseplants on the sills. Dad teased mother about her 'weeds' shutting out the light but felt as badly as any of the rest of us when about half of them froze one cold winter night. As the Depression deepened, work was not easily available and the only openings were for 'hired girls' usually on a short-term basis during harvest or periods of illness. Wages were practically non-existent but it was something to have a job at all.

I obtained a job on a farm at Legal, for a farmer who had two small children and an invalid wife. I practically raised the children and tended to the needs of their mother and learned the German language on the side. It was wartime and manpower was scarce so I

did chores and farm work in general. I worked hard but was treated like one of the family and the experience has proved invaluable. However, they spoiled me forever for working under conditions where you were just the 'hired girl'! After wartime restrictions were lifted my employer's brother-in-law emigrated to Canada and with him and his wife and family, my services were no longer required. After nine years, I felt that I needed a change of scenery in any case. I went to Manitoba to make the acquaintance of the relatives left behind and was tempted to accept work in a market garden complex belonging to one of them but decided to return to Alberta. My mother's health was failing — and I did not feel at home in a uni-cultural area after my multi-cultural upbringing. I had a good working knowledge of English, French and German and still enough savings to get me started on a business course, which I planned to do in the fall, after working one more summer to increase my savings. By chance this summer brought me up to Grande Prairie and resulted in my taking my business course in St. Joe's in Grande Prairie rather than McTavish in Edmonton. Upon graduation I obtained work at the Research Station — as the junior typist, starting in June 1951.

A couple of years later dad came up for a visit — mother's health was not up to it — and he bemoaned the fact that he had stopped in Tawatinaw back in 1935; he fell in love with the Peace River area. Meantime, the younger family members had grown up and left home one by one. Ernest went overseas with the Calgary Highlanders and remained in Europe for the Occupation until a year after the war, when he returned to help with farming operations. The baby of the family married the first Christmas I was at Beaverlodge, leaving Germaine at home to look after the farm chores and our parents who were both now in poor health. She had been the shy, quiet one — staying home and carrying on as the others left. When both parents passed away within two years of each other, in their mid-sixties she was left rather lost. I had by then formed an informal partnership with John Wallace in the Beaverlodge Nursery — he was head gardener at the Experimental Farm and his nursery was a hobby growing by leaps and bounds. Mrs. Wallace was also in rather poor health and we invited Germaine to join us and try our type of work for a season — and she proved to be a natural greenhouseman. We remodelled the garage to live in and that became our home and the Nursery office for the next few years. As Mrs. Wallace's health continued to fail, Germaine assumed more and more of the greenhouse work, eventually taking it over completely. In time Mrs. Wallace lost one leg to diabetes — the same illness that had taken our mother — and became a wheelchair patient and also pretty well Germaine's responsibility along with the greenhouse.

Typing horticultural reports at the Farm greatly expanded my knowledge of horticulture but I soon began to feel that I needed to improve my basic schooling, so enrolled in the Department of Education Correspondence Branch, completing most of my high school this way. I must admit that facing the New Math at the Grade 12 level was a little too much



though. The Experimental Farm was going through a period of expansion again — Ottawa was re-arranging the organization and Beaverlodge became the Administrative centre for the farms at Prince George, Whitehorse, Fort Simpson and Fort Vermilion, forming what is now known as the Northern Research Group. Along with this expansion came staff change — Mr. Stacey and Mr. Ernes both retired and people moved around rather rapidly. I moved from typing to clerical — and a few months after became a clerk, landed in Ottawa for a two-week course on data-oriented bookkeeping.

During the summer of 1961, the converted garage which served as office and living quarters went up in flames, leaving us with water-soaked records, no all-year greenhouse and no place to live. We purchased a small house in Beaverlodge — Mrs. Little's Style Shoppe — moved it up to the Nursery and located it near the new greenhouse and this became house and office for the next ten or eleven years.

In 1963, the St. Mary's Separate School, then about four years old with an enrollment of about 100, lost its secretary-treasurer through illness. I consented to take on the job — a few hours a week, on what I thought was a temporary basis. It still is. With John retired from the Farm, my duties were not as heavy at the nursery and Germaine was becoming a very good greenhouseman, so I was able to take on this extra job. At last, I was back into some facet of Education — one with which I was totally unfamiliar. I found it interesting and challenging and realized that there is a side to education with which you certainly do not become familiar as a student. Ernest came up one spring between a lull in his work in a winter lumber camp and a Legal farm in the summer. He decided that he liked what we were doing and joined the staff the next spring. For several years he still returned to a lumber camp in winter, then decided to enroll in the University of Guelph's Horticultural Diploma course by correspondence, an occupation which has kept him busy every winter since. Germaine filled in her winter evenings between greenhouse seasons by enrolling in an American Art Schools correspondence course which she also successfully completed.

In spite of setbacks — floods once or twice, drought at other times the Nursery had continued to grow and our mail order trade now spans the continent. Wherever conditions are tough, people try our material. As a child picking saskatoons for dessert — they were very common then — I never would have believed that years later, one of our main concerns would be to meet the demand for plants, but this has certainly been the case.

The rest of the family — four girls and a boy — are fairly regular visitors to the Peace Country now and some of the younger generation have settled in and around Grande Prairie. Two girls are at Westlock, one at Morinville and one at St. Albert and our involvement with horticultural affairs seems to have rubbed off on all of them. The younger brother is in the Fort Nelson area.

John Wallace having lost both wife and daughter to illness within a year, carried on with the management of the nursery. By now each of us had pretty well set-

tled into a particular phase of the operation, along with several seasonal assistants and he is the coordinator. In 1971 John and I were married — thus completing a long-standing informal business partnership and in 1973 we finally replaced the small house with a new dwelling-office-greenhouse complex and became the Beaverlodge Nursery Ltd., the better to carry on with the long-term objective of providing beautification for northern homes.

#### **“THE BULL OUTFIT” — by Beth Sheehan**

“Dangerous and heretical,” thundered the Methodist Church Court — “dangerous to surrender all to God without the intervention of an ecclesiastic; heretical to proclaim with Christ, ‘I do always the will of Him who sent me.’ It was all right to talk about it; to pray about it was not only proper but essential. But to actually expect it to happen, and further — to claim it as an accomplished fact — audacious! “This is capital sacrilege, intolerable presumption! Man must always remain a sinning animal, aiming, but never expecting to achieve what he aims at.” So pronounced the Methodist Church of 1892 in Toronto.

The Rev. Nelson Burns could not give up his beliefs, so he, together with the Rev. Paul Flint, the Rev. Albert Truax and five others of like mind were cited as heretics and expelled from the Methodist Church. At these trials no question was raised as to the morals of the accused otherwise. From this expulsion came the birth of the Christian Association, more frequently called the “Burnsites,” in recognition of their first leader. Stress was placed on plain everyday living under God's guidance, without formal church, pulpit, preacher, or dogma.

One day in 1908, the Vice-President, 43-year-old Elias Smith, felt that God had spoken to him of a new way of life he and his wife should undertake in Western Canada. Things had not gone too well for the Smiths on an uncle's farm they had been renting, so this seeming intervention by God had great appeal. But first it must go before the “meeting” — the name given to the Burnsite style of worship. The assemblage agreed that it was God's word to the Smiths, and further, that there might be others who would wish to join them. Soon there were five families and six young men eager and willing to go. Where? To Alberta — probably around Edmonton. They would travel together; share expenses, labour and machinery. Since they had little cash among them, they would try to get land in a block so they could make better use of equipment and labour. There was no plan to go as missionaries.

As a reward for serving Great Britain in the South African and Boer Wars, veterans were given land, called South African Scrip. Many of them had no desire to farm or otherwise use the land, but they were allowed to sell it and the current market price was from \$450 to \$850 for a half section. They found eager buyers among the Christian Association, who availed themselves of this means to procure more land than normal homestead rights allowed.

By March, 1909, the five families had disposed of all possessions except those deemed advisable by the group to take West in a C.P.R. carload of used machinery and household goods. Another carload of





The Bull Outfit assembling supplies in Edmonton—1909.



The first upset experienced by the "Bull Outfit" on the trail. R. C. Lossing had a wagon with a 14' reach and though an experienced teamster he was the first to tip over. It was learned that baled hay rides

better on top of the load and hardware in the bottom. Those shown are J. M. Miller, George Flint, Elias Smith, William Crabbe and Mr. Lossing.





A noon day camp on the trail to Grande Prairie. The party had just completed a good half day's travel and the air had been very cold that forenoon as may be judged from the warm clothing. In the group were Mrs. Lossing, Mrs. Drake, Mr. McNaught, Clarence Lossing, Mrs. Smith, E. A. Smith, Mrs. Gaudin, Garnet Truax, and R. C. Lossing and others not so recognizable.



Hunting for land in 1909. Transversing grass 3 to 4 feet tall on the farm which afterwards became the Dominion Experimental Sub-Station. First seat: Victor Flint, Garnet Truax. Second seat: Amos Sherk, E. A. Smith, I. E. Gaudin. Third seat: Billy Pierce and Mac Miller.



The Christian Association group at Beaverlodge 1916.



The "Bull Outfit" at Mac Miller's first home.



D. C. Cranston—1909. Washing up in Woodchuck camp on the Lesser Slave river.

new machinery was bought from the Massey-Harris Company of Brantford. And the group had the exclusive use of a colonist car for travelling.

Those who left Toronto on March 16, 1909, were: Mr. and Mrs. Elias Smith (43 and 39 years of age); Mr. and Mrs. Amos Sherk (53 and 51); the Sherk children — twins Maud and Marley (17) and Lulu (12); Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lossing (? and 50) and Clarence (14); Mr. and Mrs. William Crabbe (69, 62); the Crabbe's daughter, Mrs. Macklin Miller, her husband "Mac" and children — Albert (13), Fred (9), Cliff (6), and Mary (3); Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Shisler (25, 23); Sam McNaught (married but travelling alone); Don Cranston, Sam Sargent, Garnet Truax, Billy Pierce, — all in their late teens or early twenties. The Smiths, Sherks, Lossings, Crabbes and Millers were members of the Christian Association; LeRoy Shisler was Mr. Sherk's nephew but not a member; Sam McNaught's wife was a member; and the parents of all the young men were members, although few of the young people followed their parents' religious convictions to the extent of attending meetings regularly, though they shared decisions on the trail.

The colonist car was not a luxury coach. It had hard slat seats; passengers provided their own straw ticks and bedding and food. A stove for their use was set up in a corner of the car and here the women did the cooking. A popular card game, euchre helped pass some of the four or five days it took to reach Edmonton. Gor-



don Sherk (23) joined his family at Winnipeg, having come up from North Dakota where he had been working. George Flint (22) left New York to join his brother Victor (19) in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, and they caught up to the group in Edmonton.

Arriving at their first goal, the Burnsites rented houses or stayed with relatives or friends, until decisions were reached about the next step. Mr. and Mrs. I. E. Gaudin and Mr. and Mrs. Chester Drake, also Burnsites, had been in Edmonton for a few years in the real estate business, and had been looking for a block of land for the group. Unsuccessful in finding one nearby, they studied literature on the Peace River country, distributed at the Land Office. Rede Stone and an Oliver Johnson had been there the year before and had built cabins along the Beaver Lodge River. They reported that they had ridden all over the country in their shirt sleeves in November, and because they were so impressed with the country, they were now on their way to get their families and take them back.

Allie Brick, M.P.P. for the Peace River Constituency, strongly advised the group to go to the Peace, "and keep on going until you get to the Beaver Lodge River valley," he said. "It is the most beautiful part of the country." They also learned it would not be difficult to get a block of land together, and so far there were scarcely any settlers. (The summer of 1909 the Rev. Alexander Forbes counted only 50 white people between Bezanson and Pouce Coupe, though some believed there were a few more than that.)

It was God's word to the group to go to the Beaver Lodge valley. Preparations began at once. More goods and machinery had been brought from Ontario than could be hauled in one trip for such a long distance — approximately 500 miles — so they built a shed in which to store some of it, and some was sold by auction, among it many sealers of home-preserved fruit, which had to be exchanged for dried fruit.

The men were told that oxen were better on the trail than horses, and did not need oats for feed, so they searched the surrounding country and purchased eighteen teams, then added wagons, a horse, and a buggy.

The Sherks had brought **The Car** — a wondrous vehicle to be drawn by horses, which Mr. Sherk had built in Ontario but never used. It resembled somewhat a small streetcar on low wheels, with seating for nine adults and three children. Mr. Sherk had thought it would be ideal for the women and children to ride in on the trail — and indeed it was — at first.

On April 20, 1909, the group left Edmonton to much fanfare, and that seems to be where the nickname "The Bull Outfit" originated. The 36 fine big oxen, the 14 loaded wagons, and **The Car**, made quite a procession as it wended its way out of the city. Most of the young men had never driven an animal before, and one of them remarked, "It was like a three-ring circus to see us go through town." Mr. Gaudin described the assemblage as "the best bunch of oxen that ever left Edmonton — not to mention the men and women." They left around 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon for just a short trail run of four miles, then made camp.

Mr. Gaudin and the Drakes had decided to join the group but Mr. Gaudin could not leave that day, so kept the horse and buggy to follow later. He was named secretary of the colony, and business manager. There were now thirty-one in the group.

In the morning of April 21 their wagon wheels were frozen fast to the ground, but after they got them rolling they made about thirteen miles that first day. Don Cranston had trouble with his team and they went into a ditch, nearly upsetting his load, but the men managed to hold it upright and get it back on the level without mishap. The road was fairly good but there was a cold north wind.

In the next four days the men and oxen were beginning to understand each other and about 13 to 15 miles were made each day, with everyone enjoying the trip. "Cliff Miller fell off the wagon," recorded Mr. Gaudin in his diary — but then Cliff was only six years old!

On April 25 three inches of snow fell and it turned very cold. The ladies and small children rode in **The Car** but the men had to suffer the elements. They reached the Boston Hotel at 4:30 and put up for the night. "Oxen stabled and fed, use of bunkhouse all for eight dollars," recorded Mr. Gaudin. "Delighted to have shelter for man and beast. Women baked about 140 biscuits as well as oat-cake scones. The bunkhouse is a pretty dirty place but is possibly better than a dirty tent." Maud Sherk recalled graffiti on the walls — 'Poorest hay, poorest shave, poorest place of all.' Mr. Gaudin continued, "Smith is a good boss but he works too hard himself. Cranston took a photo of the Boston. The appetites of all are most surprising — hard matter to fill the boys on hard-tack and cheese. Eggs 20 and 25¢, milk 5¢."

Mr. Smith had been made Trail Boss and Mrs. Smith was in charge of the food. Gordon Sherk lined up the wagons and Victor Flint was sent ahead each evening, on the horse to find camping places and get water for the people before the animals drank.

By April 27 Athabasca Landing had been reached. There they found a trading post and some large freight sheds. The ice had not gone out of the river — a most unusual circumstance for the time of year. They discussed their situation with experienced people at Athabasca Landing and Mr. Smith told of their decision. "Finding that we were too heavily loaded to make much headway and taking the advice of those who knew the trails, we arranged to ship 12,000 pounds of freight by the Northern Transportation Company boats from here to Shaw's Point on the west end of Lesser Slave Lake. Wood was used for fuel on the boats and officials had difficulty getting wood cut, so induced our party to cut from one to 200 cords of four-foot wood and pile it on the bank of the river. We would get two dollars a cord if the work was satisfactory." It cost them \$2.25 per hundred-weight for shipping by boat.

Here too, the comfort of **The Car** had to be relinquished. It was too low and caused a great deal of trouble getting it over stumps and mudholes. It is believed a bachelor in Athabasca was glad to buy it for a home.

Goods to be shipped were crated before the Bull Outfit moved across the river on the ice, guided by a



half-breed. They bought six tons of hay at \$20 a ton (at Egge's Half-way House it had been \$6 a ton), and oats at 85¢ a bushel.

George Flint reported events of May 2: "In the morning the roads were fairly good . . . towards noon, we came to some long icy hills. We locked the wheels with our logging chains and one by one the loads descended. It was like shooting-the-chutes. Before we got to the bottom of the hill, the oxen's feet would slip and they would come down the rest of the way on their haunches. We had another hill to climb. It was sandy. The first half of our caravan got over safely but they cut up the road so badly for the second half, that we had to use two and three teams to a load. It took us about three hours to cross three hills . . . Came across a fire. The long grass and red willows were on fire but as the road was very wet, the fire swept along one side and by turning off a little, we passed in safety . . . bumped over about 300 yards of corduroy . . . soon found ourselves at the famous Bald Hills."

Mr. Gaudin wrote: "The awful gully extending some two miles, required two days to pass. It was just frightful — the mud in places two feet deep. Shisler's ox at one time had to be unhitched. Coming down the last hill, Lossing and Cranston upset their load for a second time. During the first day in this hole, two teams reached the top of the hill. All teams had to be trebled in order to move the wagons. Built a corduroy some forty feet in length. Dug small well and little canal in order to train the water to take across the road instead of down the wagon tracks. This was the hilliest, muddiest hell-hole I ever got into."

George continued, "The next morning some of the wagons had to be dug out of the mud, and with three teams to the lighter loads and four to the heavier ones, we managed to scramble up our new road. It was night before we got the last load up. Camped at the top of the hill.

"May 7 — We pitched our tents on the bank of the Little Slave River and called it Woodchuck Camp. (May 19) . . . here 12 days and have about 80 cords of wood cut. We have 12 men sawing, two teaming and two splitting . . . dead spruce averaging about 40 feet



Wood cutting gang near Woodchuck camp on banks of the Little Slave River. "We cut 96 cords of spruce and tamarack for Northern Navigation Co. fuel for their boats to pay for freighting some of the heavy goods from Athabasca Landing to Grouard." Front: Robert Lossing, Victor Flint, Wm. Crabbe, Sam McNaught, Chester Drake, Elias Smith. Back: Don Cranston, Roy Shisler, Gordon and Marley Sherk, George Flint, Mac Miller, Amos Sherk.

to a tree . . . easy to cut . . . bush very wet and those who do not have rubber boots get wet feet." They got out 96 cords of wood before heavy rain forced them out of the woods. That, and the mosquitoes.

It was soon seen that there wouldn't be nearly enough food and the trip was taking far longer than expected, so Mrs. Smith set up a food rationing system. She was very strict, showing no partiality. A slice-and-a-half of bread per person, one of this, two of that, no more. It was hard on the young men for they had such healthy appetites. Mrs. Sherk gave some of her rations to her boys, but when Mrs. Smith saw her doing it, she just cut down Mrs. Sherk's rations. Mac Miller had false teeth and couldn't bite the hard-tack and had to resort to smashing it with a hammer on his wagon wheel. Fish caught easily in the lake were a welcome change of diet, but were always steamed for there was no fat for frying, so even they palled in time. Except for the fish and the occasional wild bird, meals consisted mostly of porridge, bacon, beans, bread and biscuits, with hard-tack and cheese at noon.

J. K. Cornwall was running for election in the Peace River Constituency and was travelling up the river in a flat-bottomed boat drawn by six men, called trackers, who walked along the bank with a tow line. He camped near the Bull Outfit and was glad to be able to talk to prospective settlers and voters.

The road around the lake was reported to be impassable, so it was decided to ship the remaining freight, the wagons, the women and children, and the older men, by boat across Lesser Slave Lake. Adults paid \$4, children were free. The freight cost \$150. Woodchuck Camp was abandoned and the party moved on the 15 miles to Sawridge (Slave Lake), where the men dismantled their wagons for shipping and packed their oxen with only essentials.

"Imagine, if you can," said Mr. Smith, "one man leading four oxen tied one behind the other, wandering along the banks of the lake shore. Sometimes we followed a bear trail off into the bush; again, one ox would go on one side of a tree and the next on the other side, throwing pack sacks in the brush." After about ten miles of travelling in this fashion and still not being able to find the pack trail they were assured was there, the men decided they would go back and get their wagons and cut their own trail. Now with wagons, they worked their way around the north side of Lesser Slave Lake, travelling over gravel, cobblestones and huge boulders. The rocks were so bad that they tied gunny sacks on the oxen's feet to try to protect them but this didn't work because of their over-reach in walking, and the sacks would be pulled off. Sometimes they drove long distances in two feet of water; at other times they cut a road through the forest, and forded streams. This part of the long trail was their creation.

The trip was made in record time though — they arrived at Shaw's Point boat landing (Grouard) ahead of the boat. Red, white and blue handkerchieves tied together served as a banner to welcome "The Northern Light". But only Mr. and Mrs. Lossing and Mrs. Shisler arrived, and none of their freight. There had been more freight than the boat could bring, and most of the Bull Outfit's belongings were still in the





Picnic of Christian Association at George Flints.

freight shed at Athabasca Landing. They would have to wait nearly two weeks for the next boat. The time was spent in cutting another 108 cords of wood for the boats. Finally the second boat arrived with the rest of the party and their freight.

Before leaving Shaw's Point, teams were valued and all that had been held in common among the group was divided. From this juncture the Shislars and Sam McNaught travelled independently.

Seven cows and two calves were added to the entourage, costing about \$25 each. The calves were loaded into crates in the morning and George thought that if he lifted a calf every day, he should still be able to lift it when it was full-grown!

"At Grouard the Mounted Police were very particular to get the names of every one in the party, how much money we had, how much provisions, as well as our proposed destination," said Mr. Smith. "They explained that this was necessary in case of serious sickness or an epidemic, when it would be necessary to bring us back to civilization. About this time we began to think that we must be a long way from home."

Stumps were lower from here on, making travel faster. Soon the outfit was at Peace River Crossing. The sight of the Hart and Smoky Rivers joining the Peace there, the tremendously steep banks going down, down, down, for hundreds of feet to the water, the tiger lilies blazing orange on the hillsides — these were the sights that greeted the settlers on June 28 — that, and the fifty or more Indian children who came pouring out of the Catholic Mission to watch them go by.

Crossing the river on the ferry took all day, so while waiting, Mr. Sherk and Mr. Lossing made arched frames out of willows for their wagons, covering them with canvas brought from Edmonton. The covered wagons were very comfortable, especially in hot or rainy weather, and with smudge pots to ward off mosquitoes.

Stops were made at Allie Brick's ranch, Carsen's Flour Mill, then at Cold Springs where Dad Griffen and his two sons lived. He begged them to settle near

by, and gave them a bag of good potatoes to show that it was productive land, telling them about their 17 cats, "and each one knows her name!" might indicate how lonely they were for human companionship. But the Bull Outfit's collective eye was still set on the Beaver Lodge valley and they went on, reaching Dunvegan on July 4. They bought a large supply of Vermilion Baker's Flour from Fred Bedson, the Hudson's Bay Company manager there and met his charming Indian wife.

A ferry had just been installed at Dunvegan the day before the Bull Outfit arrived and they were its first cargo. They had expected to have to swim their animals across.

While the travellers climbed the 750-foot hill on the south shore, the biggest and fiercest mosquitoes in the Peace country waited to descend on them. The besieged people had taken to wearing mosquito nets over their hats, with a drawstring to fit it to the crown and another at the bottom which lay on their shoulders. In the middle a wire was sewn to keep the netting from their faces. This was the only relief they could devise, other than smudge pots. Mr. Sherk especially seemed to have the right blood type to attract them. One night he put on his hat and mosquito net, a long sheep skin coat and gloves, and slept outside, asserting that the mosquitoes could not be as bad there as in the tent.

The Esplin brothers, who lived near Spirit River for six years, hoped the group would settle near, but on they went — Burnt River, Saddle Mountains, the Beaver Dams (Sexsmith), Arthur Gunn's at Clairmont Lake and more potatoes; Bear Creek (Grande Prairie) where there was only the Catholic Mission, George Bredin's blacksmith shop and "hotel", George Diller's shack, and upstream "Dad" Smith and sons, Harry and Clyde lived. On. At Hermit Lake they met Johnny Gladue, and finally to the largest settlement, Lake Saskatoon. What joy! There was mail from home — and hard rock candy at the Trading Post for the children. Mead and Grant were branding cattle that day. Mr. Tuffle agreed to let them buy seed wheat in the fall. All-in-all a rewarding stop.

There was one more day's travel to Spruce Canyon (west of Hualien) for the last camp together. Journey's end. The beautiful Beaver Lodge river valley lay before them and seemed to be all that was claimed. It was July 14 — three months since they left Edmonton. They had encountered eight below zero temperatures, snow, ice, rain, mud, heat, mosquitoes, ferries, good Samaritans, and fresh strawberries. And now this lush hay! God had been good.

Dividing into four groups, the new settlers went out each day looking over the land. When locations were decided on, they drove stakes to await the surveyor, Walter McFarlane, who was in the area. Fire-killed spruce was close for buildings and by fall all had some kind of habitation. They had brought a mower and could cut hay almost anywhere — it was half-way up the oxen's backs. There were 250 loads put up for the winter.

Bill Bernard, Rede and Robert Stone, Oliver Johnson, Clarence Pool — their new neighbours who would become good friends while they all worked to develop this new country. Jim Dodge, Bob Steele, Henry Roberts and many others soon followed and the community grew quickly.

By October flour was needed again, so men went to the Shaftesbury settlement on the Peace for it. But the wheat was still in the stooks, and there was a wait of about ten days until it was threshed, then taken to the Catholic Mission to be ground.

At the same time other men had gone to Spirit River to get a portable steam engine and sawmill from English and Calkin, store operators. It was set up on the banks of the Wapiti river with Joe Boyd operating it. From that mill came lumber to build houses and barns.

Individual member's stories are told elsewhere — they all farmed, and Mr. Gaudin also started the first store in what became the centre of the community. Mr. Lossing had the first Post Office. The Elias Smiths operated a stopping place and butcher shop. Mrs. Drake was the first school teacher (her husband's death in 1911 was also a first). The Bull Outfit made up a large part of the nucleus of the community of Beaverlodge and many of their descendents are still carrying on the co-operative community spirit brought by their forefathers in 1909.

Out of the group of 31, Billy Pierce, Sam Sargent, Don Cranston, George Flint and the Shislers eventually returned to Ontario, and in time Garnet and Maud Truax went to Vancouver. The late Donald Albright stated that the 28 remaining probably made one of the best percentage examples on record of successful pioneer settlement. "They came with a purpose and most of them stuck with their aim."

At this date Maud Truax, Marley Sherk, and Lulu Edgerton-Allen are living in Grande Prairie; Clarence Lossing is in Beaverlodge, and LeRoy Shisler lives in Tucson, Arizona. There are probably more than 100 descendents of the Bull Outfit, more than half of whom still live in the Peace River country.

## THE FIRST SETTLERS

In the spring of 1898 George E. McLeod, with a partner named Wright, and Jim Brooks, with a partner

named Gates, left Edmonton for the headwaters of the Smoky, attracted thither by stories of minerals which McLeod had heard from travellers and prospectors in British Columbia. On the banks of the Beaverlodge river near the Bernard place they whipsawed lumber and made a large camp, setting traps for game and fur. That was the year of the Klondike rush and during the ensuing winter the campers were repeatedly surprised to find trails cutting across their trap lines. Following these trails they would come across stranded Klondikers in two's and three's cooped up in a little hut perhaps ten feet square, with a sheet-iron stove and usually not too much grub or anything else. One man who had started out with two sacks of flour and a piece of bacon concluded that he had too much grub. He disposed of a sack of flour and had only one sack with which to face the winter. Gradually the four prospectors rounded up 11 argonauts and nursed them in their camp on the Beaverlodge. Some of them had contracted scurvy and spent a miserable winter. The builders of the camp had provided themselves with a good grubstake but their medication went to the unfortunate pickups and they themselves had to subsist on the campers' standby of flour and bacon with whatever fresh meat could be obtained. It is remarkable that only one of the party died during the winter.

In 1902, James McCreight, an Irishman visited the Beaverlodge Valley. The next spring, assisted by Ralph Dryer he brought in 60 head of cattle, good grade Shorthorn 2-year old heifers branded 701 which he had bought in Calgary and brought in over the Lac Ste. Anne Trail, wintering them on the Bernard place. The next spring he moved to the east end of Bear Lake, where he stayed two years, then sold out to Alex Monkman in 1905 and left the country by way of Pine Pass.

In 1903, a Mr. Rawk, his father-in-law, Frank Knott and Johnnie Grant and their families moved into the flats south of Sherks. They sowed a patch of wheat late in the season and it was frosted. Their crop of oats and their potatoes fared well. Professor James Macoun visited them August 17 and found the wheat and barley headed and the potatoes in flower. After two months they moved back to Lake Saskatoon, then to Spirit River and from there to Edmonton. Alex Monkman said they were principally interested in fur.

The stage is now set for the arrival in 1907 of Wm. (Bill) Bernard, the first permanent settler. That same year Oliver Johnson was in search of a new home — frontier life and pioneering presenting no problem to him or his family. His search brought him from a sheep ranch in Oklahoma to the King Edward Hotel in Edmonton. A fellow guest was Albert Tate — a man working for a C.P.R. survey party. Tate described the Peace River country concluding, "God put everything into the Beaverlodge Valley — coal, water, wood, weather, animals and grass, springs, rivers and berries." He mapped out the area so there would be no mistake. Oliver sent word for his wife and family to come to Edmonton and he left for the Beaverlodge Valley. Coming in with him were the Rede and Robert Stone outfits and they settled as neighbours along the Beaverlodge river. Johnson established a store and



traded with the Indians while he cut hay and broke land. Bernard, Johnson and the Stones were the nucleus of the settlement in the Beaverlodge Valley. These men had to "squat" on their land until surveyor Walter McFarlane had determined their boundaries in 1911.

With the arrival of the Bull Outfit a settlement appeared on the side hill overlooking the valley and the mountains beyond. This settlement soon grew into a trading and social centre. I. E. Gaudin's General store and lumber yard, Mrs. E. A. Smith's restaurant, the post office in the R. C. Lossing home, and Harry Bennington's livery barn were the original businesses established. Later Elias Smith opened a meat market, the Christian Association built a church and the government provided a telegraph service. Banking began in 1920. Sampson Bros. opened a hardware store and Mrs. Halliday opened another eating place. Another church, a school, a community hall, a hotel and several residences were added before the "Big Slide" in 1928.

In 1928 the railroad had progressed as far as Beaverlodge but room for trackage was not available on the hill-site. The businesses of Beaverlodge met the situation by calmly moving to where the present site now stands. The "Old Town" has now reverted to a hamlet of the County of Grande Prairie where the McFarlanes and the E. C. Staceys can live on enjoying their vista of the Beaverlodge Valley and the Great Canadian Rockies beyond.

The early homesteaders had to do a lot of "long-term" planning. All supplies had to be purchased a year in advance. Goods had to be durable and sufficient when you were 500 miles from your shopping centre. After the New Year teams would start for Edmonton expecting to be back in six weeks. Settlers learned to make good use of the wild life; deer, moose, rabbits, prairie chickens and partridges. Trout and grayling could be caught in the river.

Hay was plentiful including peavine and vetch and each man soon learned his needs for the long winters. As early as 1908 Jim Corey and Henry Patterson were known to have used a mower to help Alex Monkman put up hay.

The first task of a settler was to pitch a tent for a home until logs could be cut and a house built. There were plenty of fire-killed logs that made excellent buildings. The floor, often as not, was bare ground until such time as the luxury of boards could be managed. The roof would be built of poles lying against the ridge pole, then covered with sods ploughed from the prairie grassland. Spring usually saw a pretty green roof appear. If rains came the sods absorbed just so much water — then dripped for days after the rain ceased.

Oxen with their simple harness of collar, tugs, bits and reins were man's best friend. They were good in the mud, thrive on grass and could be fattened for slaughter when their days of usefulness were over. In winter the oxen were shod with a two-part shoe each with its heel and toe calk. All that was needed to drive the oxen was patience and an uninhibited vocabulary.

Once arrived here over the long trails it became expedient to procure horses. Rounding up wild horses



Picnic Outing of Beaverlodge and district folks when Newgard's sister was visiting 1917.



The first bridge across the Beaverlodge river, west of Beaverlodge.

was one method of doing this. Jack Harding is reported to have rounded up a band of Indian ponies only to have them "reclaimed" by the Indians. Leon Ferguson, manager of H.B.Co. at Dunvegan brought in some 200 head of Oregon extraction for sale to Klondikers. Monkman rounded up some wild Iroquois horses at Kleskun Hill and traded them to the Beaver Indians. He also bought four mares from Jim Brooks that had been bred to a Standardbred stallion, which improved the quality of his stock. By 1907 Mead and Grant had brought in Clyde mares and a registered Clydesdale stallion — then a Hackney stallion and gradually this breeding penetrated the Beaverlodge Valley.

Lights were mostly candles but ranged from kindling flares fired in the stove to kerosene lamps and lanterns when kerosene became available. Many women are recorded as having washed their clothes in the streams and rivers, but a scrub board, copper boiler, galvanized tub and soap made from lye and beef tallow was the more general laundry equipment. Sad irons were 'shared' in neighborly fashion. Churns were luxuries that came with time, mostly a creamer with a home made dasher sufficed to put butter on the table.

The flu epidemic of 1918 took many lives but we marvel now at the general lack of illness among the pioneers. Doctors' duties were mainly assumed by the district health nurse but there was a doctor at Lake Saskatoon before 1920. Midwives were handier and generally competent.

Court cases were few and far between. The first one recorded was at Arnold Johnson's home with Bill



C. F. Lossing starting out for Edson in the winter of 1913-14. The freight racks were loaded with baled hay, sacks of chop and a grub stake.

Some of the feed would be cached at convenient stopping places enroute awaiting the return trip.



O. H. Johnson on extreme right, Leon Ferguson, fur agent for Revillon Freres, C. O. Pool, Mr. Ferguson's cousin, Lake Saskatoon 1911.

Leaving Edmonton, Feb. 14, 1911 with the first threshing outfit freighted into the Beaverlodge District, by way of Grouard and Sturgeon Lake. C. O. Pool in the lead, Bob Steele and A. Johnson.







Grant the Justice of the peace. Walter McFarlane was charged by St. Pierre Ferguson, the Forest Ranger of Spirit River, with starting a small bush fire near McNeil's Lake.

Sociability in the early 1900's depended in the main on the versatility of the settlers. To Beaverlodge, Billy Johnson brought his musical talent and flair for drama. He directed numerous plays and minstrel shows besides playing the piano for early dances. Equally appreciated were Inez and Archie Stone's and Vic Flint's mouth organs, Harry Walker's banjo and Doug McFarlane's saxophone. The 24th of May sports were concluded with a concert and a dance. When Billy Johnson's music became outdated, Bert Funnell's orchestra from Halcourt and A. B. Hedman's "sweet music" from Grande Prairie were invited to play. And remember Ray Johnson, George Vogt, Basil Hill and Ted McLean? And Doug and Alma McFarlane's orchestra?

Bill Boyd of Fairview brought the first weekly movie. "Chautauqua" brought a series of interesting cultural programs for a week in the summers. And all this sociability took place in the Great War Veterans' Hall — a hall built by the community as a memorial to those who served in World War I.

In 1911 an organization that called itself the Redlow U.F.A., but acted more as a Chamber of Commerce, was formed. E. A. Smith was president, C. O. Pool vice-president and D. C. Cranston the secretary-treasurer. Their concerns were varied. In their minutes we find reference to organizing a cemetery; discussion of a Local Improvement District, concern for a Sports Ground, a bridge over Spruce Canyon, a coast outlet, the changing of the Redlow Post Office name to Beaverlodge, and Beaverlodge Post Office to

Lake Saskatoon, a request to the R.C.M.P. to "investigate" a prevailing disease, and reports on the grasshopper menace. They also petitioned for a telegraph office, looked after local road conditions and by 1915 were considering the question of forming a municipality.

#### THE JOHN FOSTER STORY

John Foster is the son of William Foster of Stranocum, County Antrim, Northern Ireland. He was born in 1906 in Ireland and in 1925, at the age of 19, came to Canada. For two years he worked in Neepawa, Manitoba for Donald McNab. He arrived in Beaverlodge in 1927 to visit his aunt and uncle, the William Martins. He decided to stay and worked for 15 years at the Beaverlodge Experimental Station.



Hockey on McNaught's Lake — J. Foster, Cecil Fawkes, Eileen, Bruce and Gordon Albright.





Jack Harcourt and John Foster hauling winter fire wood, 1929.

In 1934 he married Flora Hume. He started farming and a seed buying business in 1942. It has grown over the years with cleaning plants in Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge, Dawson Creek and Fort Saint John. His large farm is managed by his son-in-law, Cecil Nichol. John retired in 1971 and sold his business to the family. Just for exercise he manages Vanguard Camper Village in Grande Prairie, where he and his wife Flora now reside.

John and Flora have five children. Neill is married to Marilynne Klinck of Kamloops and is an evangelist and writer with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Janet is Mrs. Roger Baron of Calgary. Joan is a missionary nurse in Mali, West Africa. Norman and Norma, the twins, are both married — Norma to Cecil Nichol of Beaverlodge and Norman to Gladys Driedger of Grande Prairie. Neill, Norman and Norma all live in Beaverlodge.

#### I. E. GAUDIN

One of Gaudin's most cherished and closely guarded documents is the Gaudin Family Tree. The record goes back to the year 1540 and even to the Crusades and it would seem that in each generation there were patriarchs as well as scoundrels. The present generation guard the record closely in the hope that any blemishes will remain buried. The family name comes from the Latin "gaudeo", to rejoice.

The Gaudin family were Huguenots who migrated to the Channel Islands to escape oppression. There they took a keen interest in religious matters. One member was a co-founder, with John and Charles Wesley of the Methodist Church. Another is mentioned several times in Pepys' Diary. One of the lesser line was guillotined with his girl friend for poisoning hospital patients. Several went to New Zealand and some to Canada. At least one served as a missionary to the Indians in northern Ontario. Another was Lieutenant-Governor of Prince Edward Island in 1769.

Irving Esdale Gaudin was born in 1890 near Dalhousie, New Brunswick, one of the 12 children of Jane Finnis, of Scottish descent and William Gaudin. While the family was quite young they moved to Grey County, Ontario. Irving attended school at Collingwood

and Brantford Collegiates and normal at Ottawa and taught school for a while. He married Annie Might of Owen Sound, Ontario who died a few years later. In 1906 he married Elizabeth Porter. Their son D'Arcy was born in 1908 at Vegreville, Alberta. In 1907 he came west and entered on a business career, at Winnipeg and other Manitoba towns. In Edmonton he was in partnership with C. A. Drake in the real estate and insurance business. There he was prominent in helping organize the trek of Christian Association members to the Peace in 1909. At Beaverlodge he proved up a homestead and a South African Veteran's Scrip and returned to commercial life. Mrs. Gaudin and D'Arcy did not come north until 1910.

Gaudin's first store at Beaverlodge was started in a small way in a log building on his homestead opposite the Federal Research Station. A better site was found later on the corner of the R. C. Lossing farm, where a thriving general store and post office were conducted.

Mrs. Elizabeth Gaudin was a quietly efficient lady. She helped in the store and attended the telephone exchange. The family remembers especially the many calls that came at night for the doctor and the many trips they themselves were called upon to make to the Grande Prairie Hospital to aid in "Blessed Events."

As early as 1913-14 Gaudin freighted \$20,000 worth of goods over the winter trail from Edson, 260 miles. Before the steel was extended west from Grande Prairie it was common practice for those hauling grain or livestock to market to back-haul supplies for the Gaudin Store, thus paying the expenses of the trip or reducing an outstanding store bill.

In 1916 Gaudin built a large department store at Clairmont where over-expansion coupled with a bad harvest period forced liquidation. All the creditors were fully reimbursed. The building itself later burned. The Gaudins returned to Beaverlodge where they continued to serve the public.

It is difficult at this date to realize the position of the corner storekeeper in a pioneer community. Irving was at all times a trader, counsellor and a banker. He was a good speaker at meetings, a clear logician and had a keen sense of humor. At times he supported





I. E. Gaudin's store, the first store on the hill.



D'Arcy Gaudin in front of Gaudin's first store.

Liberal candidates, travelling as far as Spirit River and Peace River to meetings. He was a founding member of the Agriculture Society at Lake Saskatoon in 1912. Anyone having a problem was counselled "to talk it over with Mr. Gaudin."

D'Arcy literally grew up in the mercantile business working in the store when not in school. D'Arcy knew every man, woman and child in the area and they all knew him. Perhaps what we all remember most was his cheery greetings and his whistling as he went about checking invoices or filling shelves. His great love in life other than his family, was cars. He curled and played a little baseball but only if it didn't interfere with a car trip about the countryside. On one occasion



Gaudin's Store, 1923



D'Arcy and Betty.





Mr. and Mrs. Gaudin and D'Arcy at home, 1927.

when he had bought a new car and at a time when cars were a rarity, he made a spectacular dash out to Edmonton in 23 hours!

D'Arcy virtually spent his entire life in Beaverlodge, mostly in public service. It seemed natural that he enter the family store business. His influence was obvious when the new townsite forced expansion. Within a year or so he had built one of the most successful radio and appliance enterprises north of Edmonton. It is difficult for a son to follow a successful father in business and community leadership but D'Arcy proved quite capable of the feat.

Elizabeth Gaudin was active in the business until she suffered ill health which necessitated her retirement. Old timers will long remember her pleasant smile and ardent attentions to their shopping needs. Mrs. Gaudin was always pleasant and gracious. She was steadfast in her Christian Association and enjoyed good music. Visiting and music sustained her right up to her later days at the Whitelaw nursing home, where she passed away in 1960.

In 1928 when Beaverlodge slid down the hill to its present site, Gaudins built another commodious store, well-stocked and well-mannered. Unfortunately I. E. was stricken by ill health and died on November 4, 1929. The business was sold to Lyle's Limited but was later returned to the family.

Elizabeth Howe of County Durham, England came to Canada in 1926 with her parents and a brother and

sister. She worked for Ramsay's Ltd. and the Hudson Bay Co. in Edmonton before coming to Beaverlodge in September 1929. Here she worked for Lyle's Ltd. and met D'Arcy Gaudin. They were married in June 1930 and as Betty herself puts it "we spent 40 happy years together." Besides being an efficient helpmate at the store, Betty was a welcome addition to the community with her musical talents. She strengthened the Anglican church choir, played the organ there for years and sang in every choral effort the community produced. She has been a member of St. Lukes W.A. since 1930 and she and D'Arcy were staunch church supporters. D'Arcy died after a lingering illness in March 1970.

There were two children. Jack inherited his father's good nature, and Esdale his grandfather's business acumen and suppressed sense of humor. From their maternal side they inherited perseverance and realism.

#### JOSEPH GERMAIN

Joseph Endore Germain was born in St. Anne de la Perde in the Champlain district of Quebec. He came to Edmonton in 1902 and was employed as a harness maker. In January 1905, he squatted on part of the present townsite of Grande Prairie but abandoned it through a misunderstanding when the surveyors arrived. Ultimately, he settled in the Spirit River district.



His first job in the Peace was working for Allie Brick. Frequently he trapped during the winter and worked for survey parties in the summer. He was also a freighter for the HBC and Revillon Freres. Then too, he engaged in catching wild horses from the numerous bands which roamed the region, and found this very exciting.

Locally, he was well known by the early settlers and assisted Oliver Johnson with the erection of some of his buildings.

#### GRANDE PRAIRIE IN LATE AUTUMN

"The splash of gold" on the hillside

Of the wild rose-covered lea —  
Like sunset cloud at eventide,  
Loosed by the gale is free.

It has flown, in a thousand golden leaves  
On the wings of the western breeze,  
Which frets and moans and sorely grieves  
So soon to bare the trees.

The purple haze, and the vale of green  
Have changed to a sombre brown;  
While the tallest peaks through the mists are seen  
Where the Rockies coldly frown.

The wild geese honk on their southward flight  
As neck by neck they strain;  
On the marsh by the lake they'll rest tonight,  
Then on for the south again.

The robins sing low their sweet refrain  
As twilight meets the night,  
Each struggles the topmost bough to gain  
To mark his course of flight.

The days grow short and the nights grow long,  
Grey clouds pile up in the west,  
The birds are hushed and their evening song  
Is stilled by the chilly blast.

J. E. Flint  
(Mrs. Paul Flint)

#### THE HOWARD HALLIDAY STORY

David Howard Halliday was born May 23, 1879 in Norfolk County, Ontario and previous to his death on August 3, 1953, he resided in Aldergrove, B.C. He was married on September 24, 1913 to Clara Amelia (Millie) Ann Buckingham, a seamstress, who was born January 15, 1882 at Mariposa, Victoria County, Ontario. Millie died May 23, 1956 at Langley, B.C.

Howard Halliday came to the Pacific Coast in 1901 and worked on the farm of William Buckingham on Sea Island. William was the father of his bride-to-be, Millie. In 1902 he moved to Revelstoke, B.C. where he was employed by the C.P.R. He was the engineer on the first work train to go through the spiral tunnel between Field and Golden.

Failing health caused him to quit railroading in 1916. He then made a trip to the Peace River country and filed on a homestead in the Goodfare district, N.W. 22-72-12. He and his wife, son Stan, aged 3 and daughter Ruth, aged 2, settled in Goodfare in the spring of 1917, bringing a carload of settler's effects to Grande Prairie, the end of the steel. They lived in a

tent until December 23rd, as Howard was delayed in erecting their log home due to the influenza outbreak. Neighbours who had intended to help build the house were stricken, so instead, Howard and his wife helped doctor, nurse, feed and do chores for the neighbours. They enjoyed good health during the epidemic, probably partly due to 'fresh air living'.

A school for Goodfare had been promised for years, with none materializing, so in the spring of 1922, there seemed no alternative than for Millie and family to move to Beaverlodge and open a restaurant — the only thing Millie had vowed she would never do — "cook for the public".

Business prospered. The meals were served home style, in bowls, mostly to hungry farmers on long grain hauls — at three meals for one dollar. The hours were long and the work was hard, with no modern convenience. To augment her income, Millie sewed, baked bread for bachelors and was the janitor for the Bank. The children were getting their education, so she never complained.

Howard continued his mixed farming operation, with much of the produce being channelled through the restaurant. In 1928 they bought a farm four miles east of Beaverlodge from Duncan Vipond and sold the farm in Goodfare to Ben Carlton. Mrs. E. A. Smith and Bob Butler bought the "New Town" restaurant business in 1929, and the Halliday family was again under one roof on the new farm. They sold the farm to Taras and Mary Nychka in 1940 and moved to Aldergrove, B.C.

Stanley David Halliday, their son, was born August 5, 1914 at Revelstoke, B.C. and received his education in Beaverlodge. He worked on his father's farm, then clerked in Adams' Bros. store; actively participated in baseball and hockey. He took part in building a summer resort at Kinuseo Falls, a dream which came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of World War II. He joined the R.C.A.F. in 1941. He married Ellen Webb of Edmonton June 24, 1950. They have two children, David George, born May 31, 1955 and Kathleen Amy, born August 14, 1958. Stan is retired from the Air Force. They live on an acreage at Aldergrove, B.C.

Mildred Ruth Halliday was born March 22, 1916 in Revelstoke, B.C., received her education in Beaverlodge, was the first Ward Aide in the Maternity Hospital in the "Old Town" in 1936, graduated from the Vancouver General Hospital in 1940 and married Verne Johnson in 1943.

#### WILLIAM V. HARCOURT

William Harcourt Sr. was a classmate of W. D. Albright at Guelph. His first work in western Canada was at the Indian Head Experimental Farm. He then moved to a rented farm at Edgely, Saskatchewan and from there homesteaded at Woodrow.

William married Margaret Hebertson, of Highland Scotch ancestry. Her father was noted for being activated so much whenever he heard the piper playing that he would march wherever he might be. There were five in the family — Andrew, Jack, Bill, Jim, and Jean. His wife died in 1924 and he continued farming until 1928, when they moved to Beaverlodge and William was employed at the Experimental Farm and worked there until he died in 1932.

That fall (1928) William and the boys homesteaded at Sunset Prairie. Jean and Andrew decided to stay in Saskatchewan. Jack joined his father in 1929 and helped Johnny Johnson break horses for spring work, which was to his liking. Then with Percy and Verne Johnson they went to the bush for telephone poles, truly an experience for a prairie raised lad of 19 years. Jack was handed a double bitted axe and was given instruction on felling. In the years to come he was to learn more about cutting trees and grubbing roots.

Bill came north that summer and we left for the homestead on November 1. We had to cut a road the last nine miles but the weather was good and we moved into the shack we had built the day before it snowed. Jim and a cousin, Norman Rocheleau joined us the next year and they worked out when they could. Fortunately it was election year and there was ample money for road building but this dried up soon after the election. Nevertheless the pay was good while it lasted: 50c an hour.

Incidentally, few realize that it was Jack who named Sunrise Valley district where they lived. The reasoning was obvious: the sun set on Sunset Prairie to the west and rose on the east side of the Kiskatinaw river, the sunrise side.

William died in 1932 and the boys quit the homesteads in favor of work at Beaverlodge. It is interesting to note that two of William's brothers were outstanding professors at the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, another was a missionary and a fourth, George Harcourt, was a Deputy Minister of Agriculture in Alberta and Professor of Horticulture at this University. His son, Earl, went north to Yellowknife with a partner in Depression Days and stayed to establish the fleet of transport boats which ply the McKenzie River.

#### GEORGE HENN

The "Beaverlodge" Henn family originated with George Henn, who received "Landed Immigrant Status" in Quebec City on July 12, 1954. One of eight children of Ernest and Karoline Henn, George received his schooling in Ansbach, Bavaria and apprenticed and worked on farms in various parts of Germany and Switzerland. He came to Canada on the S.S. Seven Seas.

The beginning was not easy for persons ignorant of language and customs but Canadians of every origin helped to ease the start. To learn the language more quickly, George used to go to the movies and sit through the showings over and over again until he could understand what was going on. Work was found in Edmonton on a construction gang and in Swifts packing plant. Interest in civic affairs led to the Extension Department of the Alberta Department of Agriculture where Mr. Hillerud counselled George to take a course in the Fairview School of Agriculture and Home Economics. In spite of some language difficulties a Two-in-One Course was taken 1955 to 1956. Courses in English language and literature were also completed that year.

On April 6, 1956 George began work on the Beaverlodge Experimental Station in the Apicultural department. Between then and his marriage in 1962 he

lived in the boarding house at the "Farm". On the side he had the job of projectionist at the theatre four times a week. There were some interesting nurses at the Nurses' Residence too.

As a matter of fact it was through one of these nurses that George met Joan Mary Marsden and she was persuaded to come to Beaverlodge. Joan was an English immigrant nurse formerly employed by the Indian and Northern Health Service.

She was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, and received her early schooling there. Further training was taken in London where she graduated as a nurse from Guy's Hospital in 1958. Midwifery training was taken in Leeds and Bradford, Yorkshire and after becoming certified she emigrated to Canada. She worked in Edmonton and Nanaimo before coming to live in Beaverlodge.

With the help of friends and neighbours the Henns set up house keeping and Joan worked for some time in the Beaverlodge Hospital as a nurse. Three sons, Paul Andrew, Daniel Ernest, and Ian James and two girls, Barbara Louise and Hilary Aimie have kept both parents busy. The expanding size of the family demanded larger quarters and on Boxing Day 1967 the move was begun from 606-5th Ave. to the now only remaining building on the original Beaverlodge town site. The house was built by Mr. Elias Smith and had previously been occupied by the Basil Hill and Taras Nychka families.

The old house where they live has great interest for Joan. She enjoys having people recall their stays in her house when it was a stopping place and to have them roam through her upstairs and say, "Oh yes! This is where I slept!" or "Oh! they've changed something since I was here." Henns put in sewer lines three years ago and found a whole pit full of animal heads from the Elias Smith butchery. The boys used them to decorate the fence posts.

George and Joan have a quarter section of bush that they call the "farm". It has 15 acres of hay on it and George dreams of more. But mostly they just like going there for picnics and camp-outs. It's an out-door recreation area of their own. George and his boys are fond of the out-door life. The family canoes, goes in for cross country skiing, bicycling and bird watching. George has also been active in Cub and Scouts.

Joan dreams of some day doing some travelling. She sews and knits very proficiently, as much from necessity as enjoyment she says. She wouldn't mind doing some "specialing" in nursing but doesn't long to go back to her profession. She says she'd love to be able to read and read and read — and then do something really different from what she's ever done before.

#### DOSS JOHNSON

Not many will recognize the name of Edward Delso Johnson as the good hearted, hard working handyman around Beaverlodge. At least that is the name on the patent of a Lower Beaverlodge homestead which Doss is supposed to have had.

Doss got his start as a seaman on the Great Lakes but little else is known about him prior to his arrival at Beaverlodge about 1910. Here he did almost every-



thing for hire, or as a matter of goodwill and had a host of friends. Those who might question a few shortcomings admired his many fine qualities. At a concert in the Victory Hall, W. D. Albright recounted that when the early settlers came in they found hand grubbing of roots very laborious, pulling stumps by oxen and horses better, by Kerstein stump puller even better, but all went exceedingly well when Doss Johnson came on to the job.

Doss had only one gear, whether walking or working and that was fast. When he got a job in Wembley mixing plaster, in an hour's time the plasterer was up to his ears in "mud". On another occasion he was painting the interior of the Chinese restaurant in Wembley, so the story goes, and worked so speedily that he painted over the clock hanging on the wall without noticing that it was there.

The hamlet did not need a newspaper; Doss kept a little black book in his hip pocket, said to contain all the hamlet gossip, and any scandal there might be. It was tantalizing when someone would attempt to inquire into its contents. Doss would refer to his book, pocket it again with a knowing smile and change the subject. Unknown to most he was a good old-time fiddler and frequently played for an hour or two in the evening for his own enjoyment. One night at an IODE dance the orchestra needed augmenting and floor manager Judd Perry persuaded Doss to play. The next day Regent McNaught was presented with a bill for \$5.00 for a bottle of scotch to "strengthen the music section".

Doss was rated the best grave digger in the community; even in the tough clay of the Beaverlodge cemetery he could dig a grave, single handed, in a short afternoon. He was meticulous in his work and when a pal was buried, Doss picked up a fence post and tamped around the fill. "There, I don't want old Jim to ever get out of there."

One of his favorite poems ran:

"Darling you are not growing old,  
It's just the years that are passing by.  
The stories that have once been told  
Are just the stories of you and I."

## W. G. JOHNSON

Bill Johnson was a man of many parts. He was slightly built and a bachelor most of his life, yet he accomplished more for the community than most. Before his arrival in the Peace he played in Stock Theater in Ontario, a different vehicle each week. East Lynne was his favorite play and he liked to recount his experiences as one of the cast.

Our first knowledge of him dates back to August 26, 1907 when Bill and Doss Johnson, William McLachlan and Bob Steele arrived at Spirit River and that fall cut a new road north of Sexsmith. In 1908 Bill took the contract to build the first ferry across the Peace at Dunvegan. Bob Steele did the cooking for the crew and much to Doss' displeasure he would mix leftover beans with potatoes. After complaining several times about the practice, Doss resorted to fisticuffs, thus setting the stage for a series of situations which Beaverlodge folk would expect and would enjoy over the years.

Needless to day, Doss was requested to part company with the ferry-builder.

Later that year, Bill, Jim Dodge and Bob Steele came to the Beaverlodge district and erected a house for Dodge but he never returned to it. They then put up Bob Steele's house. Bill had squatted on this land but gave it up to homestead the land where Doug McFarlane now lives. He and Bob returned to Grizzly Bear (Eaglesham) to operate a stopping place about the time the railroad reached Pruden's Crossing, now Watino. Between times Bill served as a steam engineer for Harry Adair.

Bill was an excellent carpenter and built the Gaudin store at Clairmont and many buildings around the Beaverlodge hamlet. He played the piano in dance bands and generally supported the entire social life of the district. Those who attended a concert at Halcourt one night will recall him accompanying Godfrey Gower, a soloist. It was a carefree audience and "Mac" Gower decided he would match wits with Bill, so after the second verse Gower stopped and announced to Bill that he had only half a shirt to his back. Bill was puzzled about the interlude and could only ask, "Where is the rest of it?" The reply came, "It's around in front." The song went on. Godfrey went on to become Bishop Gower of the Anglican Church in Vancouver.

Bill was very helpful to the young lady school teachers in Beaverlodge when it came time to prepare their annual Christmas concerts. He also directed high school plays and musicals that were worthy productions, some competing in the Grande Prairie musical festival. He directed two or three plays a year, sometimes with the impatience of a "Maestro".

About 1930 Bill married Ruth Stone, a stenographer at the Experimental Farm who had come from the Camrose district. A few years later they and two daughters, Iris and Ruth moved to Agassiz, though for a short interval Ruth operated a photograph studio in Peace River.

Bill died at the coast; Ruth and her daughters, who have married, are living in Vancouver.

## ILA LAKE

Ila Lake was born in Richmond, Virginia. He came to Canada and began ranching in the Cypress Hills district. He was constantly telling people of the 'widow women' who were pursuing him. He left the Cypress Hills because of the strong religious beliefs of some of his neighbours and he "didn't want to die in such a neighbourhood."

Ila came to Beaverlodge just prior to the coming of the railroad. He purchased the Garnet Truax farm and lived in the Truax log house in the old town for several years. Two young men who were working on the Experimental Farm became friendly with Ila and eventually moved in with him. These young men were Jim Harcourt and Johnny Foster. The boys had an ulterior motive for the empty barn on the Truax farm offered them some interesting ideas. Soon they had a litter of pigs living in the barn, this litter being the nucleus of a growing, successful Foster industry.

Ila sold his land to Johnny and moved to Crooked Creek. As were so many bachelors, he too was an ex-



pert on child-rearing, giving young mothers unasked for and unappreciated advice! In spite of this he was a fine gentleman, as a rule minding his own business. Of course there were some who admitted he had a mind of his own if anyone interfered with his business.

Ila died in the Grande Prairie hospital at the ripe age of 94.

#### ROBERT AND MARY ANN LOSSING

Robert Cromwell Lossing was born at Norwich, Ontario in 1853. He received his early schooling at Tillsonburg where he later met and married Mary Ann Avey in 1879. They moved to Otterville where their two children, Eva and Clarence were born. Eva obtained her first-class teachers' certificate and won a scholarship in mathematics. In 1901 she married Donald Albright, a promising young journalist. They lived in Summerville, Ontario.

In 1909 the Lossings decided to join their other Burnside friends in seeking a land where they could all work together in harmony with God and each other. Their famous trek from Edmonton to Beaverlodge is elsewhere related. Mrs. Lossing had her 50th birthday on the trail so they were far from "young and sprightly" to be starting pioneering feats. Clarence was 14 years old and already doing a man's work. He drove a team of oxen over the trail and several of the girls remember riding with him. Eva and her husband followed her parents to Beaverlodge four years later.

In 1913 when Tom Metcalfe quit hauling the mail, Robert Lossing took over the job. The post office was already established in their home on the hill and remained there until the town "slid" down the hill.

About the Lossings, Cliff Miller had some poignant memories — like the time Mrs. Lossing called him in when he was on his way to school, laid him over her knee and stitched a patch on his britches that had started to come loose. Again he recalls the pile driver Mr. Lossing and Clarence had built for driving fence posts. Evidently it was such a massive affair that it took a horse to power it but usually one stroke was enough. Of Clarence, Cliff said, "He was a perfectionist! When it came to building a fence, plowing a furrow or seeding, the rows were all perfectly straight. He set a good example!"

Another lady — a young girl in the early 1900's — still recalls Mrs. Lossing's loving kindness to her. After she had ridden many miles to attend the Association meeting, Mrs. Lossing would always have a little snack for her before she started home. Just one of many such little thoughtful things for which Mrs. Lossing was noted.

When Mrs. Lossing was struck by a car in 1934 and passed away as a result the writer of her obituary said,



Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Lossing at their new home in the old town of Beaverlodge.



R. C. Lossing hauling mail from Grande Prairie.





A neat job of breaking by C. F. Lossing, Beaverlodge, 1928.



C. F. Lossing and Edwin John's threshing outfit, 1926.

"... being in her 76th year when she finished her earthly career. Nearly all those years were strenuous for she was a hard worker with a genius for making the most of things, and her hospitality and devotion to her friends and family were proverbial.

"One could never have guessed that she had been denied the opportunity of schooling, for she had a fine mind with clear direct incisive mental processes and the instincts of a true lady. But it was especially the qualities of heart and soul that endeared her to such a wide circle of friends. She was a spiritual woman who early joined the Methodist church, afterwards identifying herself with the movement started by Rev. Nelson Burns and now represented by the Christian Association of which she has since remained a loyal member."

When the new townsite of Beaverlodge was established Mr. Lossing set up a Massey-Harris agency in the new town which from all reports suited his nature very well. Mr. Lossing was very adept at



Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Lossing, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Albright, Clarence Lossing, Bruce and Eileen Albright.

"wheeling and dealing" whether it was in horseflesh or machinery.

During the more than quarter century of residence here Mr. Lossing was prominently identified with all types of community development. His jovial disposi-



tion made for him a host of friends. Robert Lossing's scrip was sold to the Experimental Farm while Donald Albright was superintendent and Clarence farmed the homestead. Robert and Mary Ann retained their home close to their church. He died in 1937. His memorials are the many fine trees he planted in the Old Town and the new townsite in 1929.

There were two children. Clarence married Elizabeth Fynn and they had two sons, Allan and Earl. They have seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Clarence was in the lumber industry in Chetwynd, B.C. and farming at Goodlow, B.C. before coming home to Beaverlodge to retire.

Eva married Donald Albright and they had three children, Bruce, Eileen and Gordon. They have seven grandchildren.

#### **MISS MONICA MCGINN**

Monica McGinn came to Alberta from Niagara On the Lake, Ontario to visit an aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. John Sheppard of Rio Grande.

In August, E. A. Smith, then secretary of the Beaverlodge school board phoned to see if I would open the school as the former teacher, Miss Mary Campbell, had been placed on the Edmonton city teaching staff. I had graduated from the Toronto normal school and completed two years at University of Toronto and has planned to return that fall.

I opened the school in September, 1924 — grades one to eight and a grade nine group which had been out of school for a time.

Next spring I went back east but as the grade nine class had all passed the board wired me making an offer of eight, nine and ten with an assistant, George Tyrrell. Thus I was the first high school teacher in Beaverlodge. Classes in an old log building on the crest of the Old Town Hill were held, and I took this group through to grade eleven. I then went back east to continue university and came back to Beaverlodge as the new school and New Town were being built. Now there were four teachers and I taught a grade one class and the music courses.

I continued thusly until marriage to Lewis King in 1935. He had hailed from Newfoundland and had graduated from Mt. Allison university with a B.A. and later received an M.A. and M.Ed. at the University of Alberta. He was principal of Beaverlodge high school until 1940.

The Kings have one son, Garner, a graduate in Medicine, and a grandson and granddaughter. All are living in Edmonton.

It is always a great pleasure to visit Beaverlodge and the country around over the years where so many friends were made. It is a real delight to meet former pupils but even more pleasant is it to answer the door and have them visit us after all these years.

#### **JOHN MURPHY**

We didn't know much about John Murphy but he commanded our greatest respect. It seems that he came west just after the Riel Rebellion and later joined the Klondike gold rush. Also, he was reported to have been a hotel chef. Those who sampled his cooking scarcely knew whether to anticipate a gourmet meal or a "shocking concoction."

Regardless, John arrived in the Old Town to take over the telegraph office from Reg Smith and remained at the job until his death in 1936. His legacies to Beaverlodge were his bachelors' parties, the founding of Beaverlodge's band and many hours of dedicated toil to develop it.

#### **MALACHIAS MURPHY — by Verne Johnson**

Mr. Murphy, generally known as Frank Murphy, or simply as "Murphy," homesteaded the S. E. of 9-72-10, now part of the George Adams' farm, in 1915.

"Murphy" was a tall, slim character, never known to do any hard work. He was a sort of horse wrangler, trapper, dispenser of illicit beverages, poker player and in general a thorn in the flesh to the local constabulary. It was generally conceded that he had some Indian heritage. His leathery, tanned visage could boast no hirsute embellishment.

Murphy never farmed his land but eventually ran a livery barn, along with other avocations, in the old town of Beaverlodge, from around 1925 to 1928. In spite of his obvious faults, Murphy was well-liked as he had a kind and generous disposition. He was a true pioneer character! May God rest his soul wherever he may be!

#### **NINE YEARS WITH THE EXPERIMENTAL FARM — by Corny Fast**

In the spring of 1935, the returns from the small rented farm near Goodfare were not enough to sustain our family, which consisted of our parents, my brother John, my wife Margaret and our three children, Arthur, Arnold and Frieda. Rita joined us a few years later. Margaret and I agreed to seek employment elsewhere. After applying by letter for work at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm, I was called in for an interview by the Superintendent W. D. Albright. We are convinced that it was on the recommendation of Rev. Jacob Nickel, who had worked there for two years, that I was accepted.

This was the beginning of a most interesting association that lasted for nine years. I am still grateful to Mr. Albright and to E. C. Stacey for the experience I received. We were fortunate that we could live in a house on the west side of the hill for the view from the window facing west was priceless and free.

Now that we are nearing the "Golden Age" we still cherish the memories of the good friends and neighbours with whom we once worked. We live in Chilliwack, British Columbia. Our children are married and have families to occupy them, so we hope to visit Beaverlodge again, not in the summer but rather during the winter when on a cold, clear night we may again observe that most beautiful spectacle, the Northern Lights! Even the beauty of the Fraser Valley, near Chilliwack, flanked by snow-capped mountains, cannot be compared with the display of a real Aurora Borealis, seen from the hill at Beaverlodge. God willing we will see it again some day.

The Fast's had lived in the Molotchna region of Russia during the Revolution when they were completely dispossessed. The parents were like lost people. They came to Canada. Corney's generation adapted quite readily and with utmost determination.



Their children are full fledged Canadians with a rich heritage.

### THE OLD TOWNSITE

To 1400 town folk, Beaverlodge is home; a pretty little town with wide tree shaded streets, five churches, six grain elevators, a swimming pool, a library, a craft centre, an ice arena, a curling rink, a community centre and many, many friendly faces and concerned persons. To the many folk in the out-lying districts from "Beaverlodge to the Rockies", Beaverlodge is their service centre.

Geographically Beaverlodge is in the northwestern part of the province of Alberta — 27 miles west of Grande Prairie, snuggled in the basin between the Rockies and Saskatoon Mountain — an elevation from where a million acres of choice farm land can be viewed at a glance.

Beaverlodge derived its name from the Beaver Indians who had built their lodges along the river — but we have adopted the Beaver emblem as our talisman, for this valley was once prime beaver and muskrat country in the eyes of the early fur traders.



The first white wedding in Beaverlodge, Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Cranston, March 19, 1914. Rev. C. F. Hopkins officiating.



Christmas concert in Beaverlodge, 1925.



Looking down the hill, Sampson's store on the left. 1921.



Stringing the telegraph wire past Beaverlodge 1915.



The "Old Town" in 1924.



The G.W.V.A. Hall, built by the community in the Old Town of Beaverlodge after World War I. It is now on the farm of Jack Smith.



Closing Branch 506, Canadian Bank of Commerce, 1925 and taking the "money bags" to Wembley. Doug McFarlane, standing and manager Nelson, sitting.



Beaverlodge's Darktown Minstrels. Center: E. J. Heller. Left: Ralph Carrell, 1925.

## TONY PHILLIPS

From memories of Tony Phillips' friends, we were able to glean something of his story. Tony and his wife Beatrice came to Beaverlodge around 1920 or perhaps earlier. Tony was a slight, sharp featured man with an English accent. His wife Beatrice was a tiny fine boned woman with a similar accent. When they lived in the "old town" of Beaverlodge they had three boys. Tony worked as an accountant for I.E. Gaudin. Both he and his wife were extremely well-liked and sociable people. Tony had a fine singing voice and his clever wife wrote poetry and played the piano. Their talents were highly appreciated at local concerts.

The Phillips left Beaverlodge in 1923 and went to North Vancouver where Randy was born. Tony worked

Grande Prairie's first school erected at Beaverlodge, 1911.





as a bookkeeper for the Capilino Logging Co. When the mill burned down Tony, out of work, took a job with a shingle mill. Being extremely clever with his hands and with tools, he made bowls, platters and lamp bases from cedar burls. He sold these at the Vancouver Hotel.

Tony and his boys were very close and did many things together. They had a badminton court in their yard and the whole family became proficient players. Tony and his boys discovered a type of resin in the firs in Capilino Canyon. They used this resin on the Kraft paper boats they made, at first in the family workshop and later in a factory on Marine Drive.

Friends of the family recall that Beatrice died in the 1950's and that Tony later married Ursula Faye. One boy, Ray, taught shop work in a school at Powell River. Vic was known to have written very successful science fiction stories. Jack served in World War II and now works for Forestry services. Randy's occupation is unknown as is any marital status of the boys.

The Phillips had an Airedale dog who was awarded a free license - because he was over 20 years of age.

Tony and Ursula live in retirement in North Vancouver.

#### **MISS HELEN PHILLIPS, R.N.**

Beaverlodge must not forget its first resident nurse, Miss Helen Phillips.

Miss Philip was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, and trained in Calgary General hospital. After graduation in 1925, she went on staff at the Grande Prairie Municipal hospital and when the Beaverlodge Maternity hospital was opened in January, 1937, she was sent west to run it. Later she nursed at Weyburn, Saskatchewan and at the Royal Columbia hospital in New Westminster. She has two sisters in Aberdeen, and a brother in Manchester, England.



Miss Helen Phillips, RN with (front) Barrie Rollins, Ruth Olson, Robin Hunkin, Baby Lucas, in the old log hospital.



The log cottage operated by the Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital District as a maternity sub-hospital commencing Jan. 1, 1937.



The little hospital on the side of the hill was not impressive in appearance and certainly lacked almost all the requirements of a modern hospital. Yet, it provided a very valuable service to a semi-isolated district. The chances are that many people now about 40 years old were born there, with the assistance of Dr. James Robert Nixon, Matron Phillips and Nursing Aides Ruth Halliday and Jean Mackie.

Today the building remains in good repair and serves as the George Henn tractor shed.

#### PRAIRIE TREES

I like best the open spaces —  
Little spaces, fringed with trees,  
Trembling aspens, grouped in places,  
Fluttering, quivering in the breeze.

Where the river madly rushes,  
Outlined by the pine's dark hue,  
As o'er rocky bed it gushes,  
Tossing spray that falls like dew.

Let me live within the spaces,  
Paradise of birds of song,  
Where the bubbling brooklet races,  
Where the sturdy spruce grows strong.

Not the wide and treeless spaces,  
Where the songbirds cannot dwell,  
Where the earth the sky embraces,  
And there's neither hill nor dell.

What though plenty fill the garner's  
Of the season's golden grain,  
Still give me the nooks and corners,  
And the trees upon the plain.

J. E. Flint  
(Mrs. Paul Flint)

Home Sweet Home! to Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Smith.

#### THE E. A. SMITHS

Elias and Mary Smith were members of the Bull Outfit trek. They homesteaded a mile east of the hamlet but soon moved in to establish "The Pioneer Stopping Place" on the corner. The buildings remain there still, somewhat re-modelled by Basil Hill and presently occupied by the George Henn family.

Mary set a good table and Beaverlodge was fortunate to have her services. She had a stern disposition and met the world face on. Even when they were to be married she vetoed Elias' wish for a June ceremony and insisted on setting a March date "so that we can have a garden". Several school teachers occupied the spare rooms before the new town was built and "The Rules of the House" were plainly displayed. On more than one occasion, about 10:30 in the evening, the call came from the proprietress's quarters, "Hasn't he gone yet?" The table fare was ample but the menu was rigid and the guests could count on chicken and dumplings on Sunday. Some of the regular male boarders were given to jokes, such as when Fred Lever, fieldman for the S.S.B. inquired of Charlie Foster, a clerk in Gaudin's Store, "Charlie, how do you sell prunes?" The answer came in a flash, "By the case!"

The Smiths had no children of their own so they "adopted" those who stayed with them, secretaries, teachers and others. They made them feel welcome and invited them to share leisure time around the "upright" grand piano, now in the Beaverlodge Elementary School. True there were "house rules" for the Smiths needed regular hours to maintain a busy daily schedule to fit the butcher shop and the restaurant.

Elias had farmed in Ontario and his contribution to the Pioneer Stopping Place was to operate the feed







Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Smith at their homestead house in 1922, several years after they had moved to town.

Elias Smith's Restaurant and "Pioneer Hotel." Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Irene Walton, Mrs. Lossing.



barn. Later he established a butcher shop and hired a newcomer, George Quiring to help him. Elias' final effort in the old town was to erect the first stage of a motel. A final log building was erected but it was to become a maternity hospital and is presently a tractor shed. With the coming of the railroad, Elias was

obliged to move the butcher shop to the new townsite, to the location now occupied by Nasedkin Bros. but he felt out of character in the busier community. Elias always had time to chat with a friend. "It's too bad if we can't find time to be sociable."

The Smiths retired to Toronto.



### S. R. SMITH

Reg Smith was a man of leisure. He worked diligently at his job of telegrapher at Beaverlodge but there just wasn't much business. Nevertheless, the Government Telegraph provided a vital need for a string of settlements remote from many communication services. To fill in the time, Reg would play chess, by telegraph, with other operators on the line, or follow such pursuits as decoding I. E. Gaudin's cost-pricings on his merchandising.

On one occasion Reg did get busy. There was talk of oil and gas seepages, so he reported the future prosperity of the region to Canada's leading railroads and in 1923 the CNR sent one of their engineers, guided by Alex Monkman, over the summit of the Pass.

Reg married Hazel Wilms and the couple were a social asset to the community. Eventually, they departed for Vancouver and some say that Reg prospered in the oil business; others say that he did well at the race track.

### EVELYN AND CLIFF STACEY

Cliff Stacey was born at Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. His father was a building contractor, descendant of second-generation carpenters and farmers in Ontario. In 1910 the family moved to Medicine Hat and in 1920 went on to Edmonton to take advantage of the university facilities.

Cliff graduated in 1924 and took a summer job at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm and this turned into a long-time affair. He returned to the University for two winters and graduated with a M.Sc. degree. His thesis studied the native grasses of the region, the first study of its kind in these parts.

Cliff was the first professional research officer at Beaverlodge and his work included all aspects of agronomy, particularly the requirements of crops in northern soils and climate. He introduced the Finnish barley, Olli to Canada, a variety which is extremely early maturing, is used extensively in weed control programs and which has dominated the malting barley



Evelyn and Cliff Stacey await your arrival.



Catherine Stacey, Science Fair Exhibit, Grade 10, 1965.



Anne-Marie Swanson and Hugh Stacey look to the future, 1969.





Catherine Stacey and Erroll Koshman, 1972.

trade for 40 years. He was a member of the team which developed Saunders wheat, a high quality variety for short seasons. His particular interest has been in forage crops, their influence in soil fertility, their use for hay and pasture usage and the production of seed on a world-wide basis. Outstanding in this respect is his recognition of the adaptability of creeping red fescue to the region and his promotion of its seed production industry.

In 1947 Cliff was appointed superintendent of the Beaverlodge Experimental Station but in 1962 he resigned to encourage the contract production of seed of foreign varieties of forage crops by Peace River Growers. In 1966 he was made an Honorary Life Member of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association. Between times he has been president of the Alberta Institute of Agrology, a supporter of local programs and for ten years was the principal organizer of Science Fairs in the Peace.

In 1940 Cliff married Evelyn MacLennan of Edmonton. Evelyn taught high school in Beaverlodge at the time when the new townsite was being developed and afterwards taught at Vegreville and Edmonton. Since her marriage she returned to teaching for a time. She greatly enjoys teaching and points with pride to the success of many of the younger generation who have gone through local schools.

There are two children. Hugh has a degree in music and in education and is teaching in Edmonton where his musical outlet is in choral work. He is married to Anne-Marie Swanson of Claresholm, a noted vocalist who has her Master's degree in voice.

Catherine has a degree in physio-therapy and is married to Errol Koshman of Edmonton, now in a B.Sc. nursing training program in McMaster's University in Hamilton.

The Beaverlodge community has offered many opportunities for its young people in ceramics, music, dancing and swimming. Catherine worked as a life guard the year that the Centennial pool opened.

## JAMES STOKER

Jim Stoker was born at Nickerson, Kansas in 1908. His father came from Stavenger, Norway where at one time he had a fishing fleet of 12 sailing boats. One winter the fleet froze in for the winter and the crew ran short of food. Afterwards he looked after his father's sheep in the mountains. Jim's mother came from Christianson (Oslo) and was married in Kansas. They farmed there for 30 years. Jim's dad also did carpenter work and was a cattle buyer.

Jim's brother came to Hermit Lake after World War I and the family followed in 1921. They bought 50 head of cattle but ran out of feed during the winter, also their cash reserves dwindled. Jim attended the Olds Agricultural College, farmed and was a weed inspector for a time. He remembers cutting ice on Lake Saskatoon for five cents a block, also cutting, sawing, splitting and piling firewood at the Richmond Hill Golf Course clubhouse for \$3.00 a cord. He used his motorcycle to power the saw and wore out several pairs of overalls on the job. It was a hard way to make money but jobs were scarce then.

In 1935 Jim married Arleen Parry, born at Neepawa and a Canadian for several generations. The family had lived at Claresholm, Calgary and Red Deer before moving to Lake Saskatoon in 1925. An older sister Laura, a nurse remained in Calgary. A brother, Albert married Margaret Miller, a legal stenographer for Joseph Archer and Mel Howey in Beaverlodge. Willard married Elda Hope of Edmonton and is now with the motor vehicle branch of the Department of Highways in Edmonton. They have two sons married and making their homes in Edmonton. A younger sister, Roberta lives in Wembley.

The Stokers have one son, Kenneth, married to Rose Guenette of Falher. They live in Peace River and have two sons.

Jim and Arlene retired in 1972 and moved into the Walton Apartments. Over the years he has taken courses in radio, T.V. and appliance servicing and threatens to become active in these fields.

At the Research Station Jim held many responsible positions, notably being in charge of the meteorological and shop sections at times. He collaborated with W. D. Albright on a scientific article dealing with variations in hillside temperatures, and in the shop erected and modified several pieces of scientific equipment. His good nature was a by-word amongst the staff.

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It didn't happen in Beaverlodge but it could have: the local paper in depression days ran the advertisement:

"For Trade, a Deforrest Crossley radio with five tubes for a milk cow with four tubes."

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Grandpa was fixing the fence and needed more tools and some assistance, hence the telephone call to Beaverlodge. The message became somewhat garbled but the recipients searched through the family treasures and soon appeared on the scene with a lovely pair of fencing foils! You name it and Beaverlodge has it.

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Mother was very proud of her daughter's interest in horses and the new mount she had recently acquired.

In the same breath mother was furious about the recent rise in the price of meat. How was she going to feed her family with costs rising almost daily?

Neighbors can be helpful. "Why not try horse meat!"



A ladies' race at the Beaverlodge Sports in 1925. Betty McNaught, Jean Lock and Mary Willis at the wire.



Pyramid. Top: Harold Pool. Second: Percy, Verne Johnson, Bottom: Ralph Pool, D. Rollin Carrell, Johnny Craig.



Ladies' Tug-o-war, 1916.

It was a big day for Beaverlodge when the automatic telephone service was installed. The A.G.T. salesmen were active selling those nice new colored telephones. But our favorite school teacher was not interested.

"But surely, Madam, you will want a colored telephone in your home." Still she was not interested.

"But, Madam, everyone else will have one and you will be out-dated."

"Out-dated! I've had one for years, a nice two-colored job."

"But, Madam, you don't seem to understand. There are new ones on the market. How long have you had yours?"

"Ever since I painted the kitchen."



Beaverlodge Belles: Ruth Johnson, Anna Johnson, Effie Flint and Irene Walton.



The first Beaverlodge baseball team. Standing: Billy Johnson, Art Chapman, Victor Burt, Bob Steele, Billy Pierce, Clarence Lossing, George Stone, Russ Walker, Sitting: Harry Cranston, Hugh Allen, Jim Bauman, Johnny Johnson and Don Cranston.





Off to the booth! Sports day. 1925.



Beaverlodge's 1912 ball team. Standing: Victor Burt, Herman Riedrich, H. W. Allen, Jack Waller, Dave McLellan. Sitting: Don Cranston, Billy Pierce, Marley Sherk, Russ Walker.



First girls' basketball team: Ruth Johnson, Anna Johnson, Effie Flint, Maude Sherk, Lizzie Fynn.



His excellency Lord Tweedsmuir, Mayor Arthur Bowtell, A. S. Redfern, the Governor-General's secretary and H. W. Clarke at the Beaverlodge Experimental station, 1939.



Beaverlodge Sports, July 1st, 1917.



The Sub-station staff—1933. L-R: R. F. Cook, Cliff Stacey, Jim Harcourt, B. Albright, John Foster, J. Crawford, John Cussack, R. E. Campbell, Mrs. Wilder, I. C. Shank, Miss Roberts, L. M. Godfrey, Mrs. W. D. Albright, V. Thiel, J. Harcourt, C. Fawkes, J. Crossley and W. D. Albright.



Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Crossley, Joanne and Paul, 1944.





Bruce Albright and his woodpile. Bruce's father, W. D. Albright judged a settler by the state of his wood pile.



George Neely, Godfrey Gower and Bill Ross trying to get the car back on the road. There was a 30 foot drop below that wheel, 1927.





Farmers gathering at the Experimental Farm, 1925.



The Boarding House at the Experimental Farm, with living quarters in the rear.





Picnickers enjoying the small fruits, Beaverlodge Experimental Farm. United Farmers of Alberta picnic, 1921.



Edna Tyrrell and Eileen Albright, 1929



Some of the Experimental Farm Staff (L) Cliff Stacey, Hank Anderson, Margaret McDonald, John Moore, Al Carder, Josie Dahl, Les Emes, John Wallace (R).



Godfrey Gower, later Bishop Gower in a sweet clover field on the Experimental Farm.





Hey! Everyone is supposed to be picking saskatoons. At the Experimental Station.



# BEAVERLODGE RURAL

## FRED ALBRIGHT

Fred S. Albright was a brother of W. D. Albright and a close friend of Clarence Flint. Prior to World War I, he was in partnership with John Brownlee, in a law firm in Calgary. John Brownlee was later to become Premier of Alberta.

Fred went overseas in World War I and was killed in action at Passchendale. His widow was on staff at Western University in London, Ontario. Fred shared his brother's faith in the Peace by sending funds to purchase land. This was secured on the site of a spring next to the George Jarvis land but was never developed by him.

## W. D. ALBRIGHT

William Donald Albright was born at South Cayuga, Ontario, of Pennsylvania Dutch extraction. He took a diploma course at the OAC and, being gifted in journalism, was appointed editor of the "Maritime Farmer" upon graduation. Later he became editor of the "Farmer's Advocate" of London, Ontario, a strong voice in agriculture. In 1908 he married Eva Belle

Lossing, of Otterville, Ontario. Thenceforth, two major forces commenced to shape his destiny. One was that the Don Albrights, the Lossings and several of their friends belonged to a religious group "The Christian Association" and several of its members had moved, or were moving, West, to secure new land in a block in the Beaverlodge Valley of the Peace. The other force was that as a young boy, Don Albright had read avidly of the early explorers in western Canada and as he matured he came to realize that "If Canada were to amount to anything as a nation she would have to multiply her 3000 mile breadth by some depth worth while." In 1913, as if to satisfy these forces, the Albrights moved to Beaverlodge.

At Beaverlodge they filed on a homestead and bought a South African scrip from R. C. Lossing, Mrs. Albright's father. Mrs. Albright assisted her father in the new post office of Beaverlodge. Money was scarce but Don was dissatisfied with the lack of knowledge regarding crops suitable for the Peace, so he imported a few sacks of grain of different varieties and reported the results to the Federal Government so others could share the knowledge. Then came a small grant, then a slightly larger one and in 1916 part of the Albright farm was rented to become a Federal Experimental Sub-station. In 1919 Donald Albright was appointed Superintendent and this arrangement continued until 1940 when the Government purchased the farm.

Eileen Albright and D'Arcy Gaudin playing in front of Mr. Lossing's post office.





Albright was forced to retire in 1945 because of illness. He died at Haney, B.C. in 1946.

Perhaps it might be said that Albright was as much a Humanist as an Agriculturist. After the ill-fated Cow Bill there was real poverty and despair in the Peace. Albright sought to counter it with optimism. He wrote a pamphlet "In The Trough of the Wave" pointing out that good times do follow lean years and urged settlers to hold on. He lectured ceaselessly in country school houses advocating farmers to take a pride in their work and to "build a neat woodpile". He pressed for organization of farmers and better legislation in their favor. Ceaselessly he admonished new settlers to tuck one-half of their capital safely in a bank for five years. "At the end of that time, if you have been successful you can use it to better advantage; if you have not been successful, you will need it." Morning, noon or night, he was eager to greet visitors to his Station and to display its work. All the while he and his staff were sorting out the various crops, and cropping practices, and issuing recommendations. Now it seems unreal but in those days, he had to ask — would corn, alfalfa and oak trees grow in the Peace? Would Grey Wooded or burned-over soil ever produce economically and would it always be necessary to buy forage seeds from Brandon or Winnipeg? Albright's life was one of crusading and he worked diligently.

There was one daughter, Eileen, born in Ontario and married to William Ross of White Rock, B.C. Bruce was an RCAF pilot in World War II and was lost over Germany. Gordon is married to Ruth Lowe and is in social service in Edmonton. Mrs. Albright resides in Edmonton.

The University of Alberta recognized Don Albright's work by conferring upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on January 5, 1946. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada

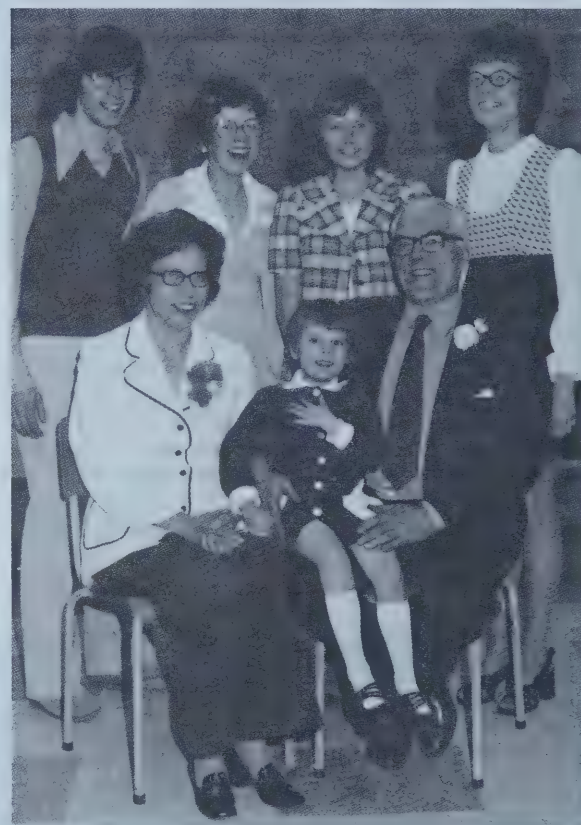


Family of W. D. Albright with home in background. Left to right: Bruce, Eileen, Gordon, Mr. and Mrs. Albright.

honored him further by erecting a memorial cairn on his beloved Sub-station, while the settlers of the Peace subscribed to the "W. D. Albright Scholarship Fund" which gave financial assistance to 24 Peace River students in search of further education.



Off to an Association Meeting. Mrs. E. A. Smith, Mrs. R. C. Lossing, E. A. Smith and Mrs. W. D. Albright. W. D. Albright is driving Nig and Dan.



Gordon and Ruth Albright's 25th anniversary. Standing are Donnie, Marion, Leona and Maxine. Charlene on Gordon's knee.

#### S. M. BAUMAN

Simeon Martin Bauman was known locally as "Jim" Bauman and everyone knew Jim and respected him as a hard worker. His parents came from Germany to Canada. Then they went to the United States and ultimately returned to Canada.

Jim was born at Waterloo, Ontario. He came west with Ed Carlson, a railroad brakeman and in Edmonton they flipped a coin, which decided them to come to the Peace. So off they started on the Athabasca Trail on foot. At the lake-head they secured jobs to feed the wood-fired boiler of a boat but otherwise they walked





Jake Dean and Davy Bauman in front of the Mountain Trail School. 1930.



Jake Dean and Davy Bauman in front of Allan Watson's shack. Later the building was turned into a chicken house.

to Beaverlodge. The story goes that when they arrived they had 35 cents between them.

Ultimately Ed returned to railroading and was killed on a switch line. Jim had the honor of being the first settler to break all his land. He ran Sherk's separator for several years. He ran a sawmill at Bauman's Lake and supplied most of the logs and lumber to build the Lake Saskatoon hamlet and the G.W.V.A. Hall in Beaverlodge. His own house and barn, considered outstanding in 1914 were built out of logs sawn on three sides, with chinking between. One story is told, that of the McClary Brand. It seems that Jim was preparing for a bath one night and he backed up against the kitchen stove!

Jim married Annie Dean of Lake Saskatoon and they had three children. David married Ina Simmons of Lower Beaverlodge and they farm near Chetwynd. Bill was a hard-rock miner and died in a mine accident. Mary, a teacher married Eugene Silvaniuk in 1950 and they are on the home place. They also have three children: Roxanne, attending University, Tyler, with Proctor and Gamble and Cody in school.

The family recalls Jim's racehorse, "Buckskin" which ran at the Lake Saskatoon sports, with Mary Ray riding. In her time Annie played baseball on the married Women's Team, against Lake Saskatoon, Beaverlodge, etc. As a youngster a favorite outing was picking berries at Van Horne's mill.

## THE BRAULS — by Frieda Enns

My father and mother with three small children, grandmother and two uncles left Russia in the spring of 1925 to come to Canada. We were Mennonites and under arrangements with the Canadian Government and the Canadian Pacific Railway we were able to come on special immigrant passes. We landed in Quebec and came as far west as Swalwell, Alberta. Here we spent our first Canadian winter. During the winter, father made plans for our next move.

In the spring we came by train to the end of the rail at Wembley where my father met us to take us to our new home the former Harry Carrell place at Beaverlodge. Dad cleared some more land to increase his acreage, built a new house and most of our furniture. It was also a great day when our new barn had a wooden roof. I remember dad tanning hides to make a set of harness. Here we farmed for 19 years.

We lived beside the river and it became a part of our lives. In summer we could easily ford it and we children spent many happy hours there. Every year dad built a walk across so we could cross to go to school in town. But in the spring when the snow melted it was a raging torrent. Day by day the waters would rise higher and higher and the ice would go crashing downstream. Until the runoff was finished kind neighbors let us drive across their fields — through six gates.

In 1945 dad sold the farm and we moved to Rosemary, Alberta to an irrigation farm to raise wheat. With the help of two small sons farming was easier but pioneer years had taken their toll on dad's health and in 1960 he sold the home place to his younger son, Henry and retired to Chilliwack, B.C. Here they enjoyed the milder climate and friends until dad was called home. In 1967. Mother died in a tragic car accident in 1972.

The children are all married: Henry farms the home place, where he raises hogs. John trucks and farms at Rosemary. They both raise and sell leaf cutter bees to increase alfalfa yields. Agatha — Mrs. Abe Wedel, resides in Black Creek, B.C. Frieda — Mrs. Nick Enns, resides in Chilliwack, B.C. For eight years my parents gave a home to Elma Sawatzky, an orphan, now Mrs. Harold Hide and a missionary in Nigeria.

## DUDLEY AND RUTH BRISTOW AND THE BOYS

Dudley Bristow was born at Spruce Grove. His father, W. E. Bristow, of English descent came from Ontario to homestead there. To finance his venture he assembled binders for the Massy Harris Company and worked as a mill wright in construction of a copper mill at Morency, Arizona. He owned the first milking machine west of Edmonton but left his dairy to spend four and one half years in France in the forestry corps in World War I. He returned to farm but later worked as a homestead and timber inspector until the natural resources of Canada were handed over to the provinces. This job took him all over the western provinces, including the Peace River country.

Dudley's mother, Daisy McKay came to Edmonton from Winnipeg on the Hudson Bay boat, "Northcote"



at the age of three in 1882. She sang in the Methodist church choir in Edmonton.

Dudley has two brothers and one sister, Jack, the older brother was farm instructor at Lake Wabanum Indian Reserve. His younger brother, H. A. (Mac) Bristow took his grade 12 in Hythe. His sister, Inga, taught the Happy Valley school near Hythe when Wembley was the end of steel. She married Leslie Maricle of Hythe and assisted him in registered seed production.

Ruth Runnalls and her twin sister Clara-Jean, now Mrs. A. E. Goebel of Calgary were born in Edmonton. Their older sister, Elizabeth also born in Edmonton, now Mrs. A. H. King resides in Edmonton. Their father Howard Runnalls, is also of English descent, his folks having come to Ontario with a group of Methodist settlers. Howard came west in 1898 after graduating from Belleville Business College, seeking adventure and land, then on to Edmonton where a sister and brother had settled. In 1903, intrigued by reports of the Peace River country he freighted supplies by team and sleigh to the Hudson Bay Co. Post at Lake Saskatoon travelling with George Martin, a high school teacher, J. B. McEachern of Dawson Creek and the Lattimers of Lake Saskatoon. Howard and George Martin planted the first crop of oats and barley near Spirit River but did not stay to harvest it. Howard wanted developed land so returned, on foot to Edmonton and bought land north of Edmonton where he farmed for 50 years. Part of his farm was included in the Namao Airport and the remainder is incorporated into the city of Edmonton.

Ruth's father was an interested community member, being active in establishing the Methodist church of North Edmonton, a member of the Alberta Wheat Pool, a charter member of the Northern Alberta Dairy Pool, member of the Edmonton Agricultural Society which evolved into the Edmonton Exhibition board, a seat which his grandson, Edward Bristow now has the honor of holding.

Howard won many ribbons with his Ayrshire show herd. The Runnalls also had a Hackney stallion "Netherall" brought over from England. It is mentioned in Grant McEwan's book, "Hitching Post".

Ruth's mother, Clara Berry Runnalls trained as a nurse in the Buffalo Women's Hospital, New York, a member of the American National Red Cross and nursed in the eastern States. In 1901 because she had had typhoid fever she was called upon to nurse a typhoid epidemic in the Saskatoon Hospital. Hence her initiation to the west and then a call to Edmonton. Clara and Howard had attended the same little school in Welcome, Ontario near Port Hope and now she met him again in Edmonton. They were married in 1912. Howard took Clara to his farm out of Edmonton where their three girls were born and took their schooling.

Ruth took teacher training at the Edmonton Normal School plus a year at University and she spent her holidays at summer school. Ruth's family travelled, but in those days it meant a one-day trip by car to Red Deer, a second day to Calgary and a third day to Banff. If you couldn't quite make it up the mountains you backed down to a switch back and made another attempt.

Ruth taught near Edmonton. She was proud to have

taught the La Plante' school near Leduc, one of the few bilingual schools in Alberta. Dudley and Ruth were married in 1940 and have two sons, Edward and Stanley. They farmed at Namao. When the Namao airport was extended to include their farm the Harris Brothers highly recommended the Beaverlodge area. They bought the Floyd Stickney farm on the Beaverlodge river and the Harris Brothers planted the Bristow's first crop. Leslie and Rowe were friends of the Runnalls' family. Rowe was first introduced to farming on the Runnalls' farm.

The late spring of 1946, the Bristows moved into the two-roomed log shack. The third spring they were here they began planting trees, 1500, around the site where they now live and have continued to plant trees every year. They moved into their new house, which they built themselves, in 1952.

Ruth laughs about the time her folks came to visit them, the second summer they were in their log house. It was raining when the folks arrived and the four-day rain had soaked through the sod and slab roof to wet the shavings that insulated the ceiling. As their guests were seating themselves Ruth saw with amazement the ceiling and the plaster on the east wall slip slowly down. It was only minutes when shavings, boards and paper lay before the horrified eyes of their visitors.

Since those humble beginnings they have built up an enviable dairy herd of Holsteins. They had a fully registered herd on R.O.P. testing and one of their best cows had a record 170% breed class average for milk and 172% breed class average for butterfat over a six year period. Other cows of the Bristow herd were also recognized in the Holstein-Friesian Magazine.

The County Fair was the place to show and advertise their cattle, even though it meant tenting at the Fair grounds for those looking after the show cattle and someone running home to look after the herd at home. The early fair days saw more sheds for housing the stock and when it rained — which it generally did — "the grounds were pocketed with frog ponds". One memorable wet show day Ruth had come from home, tidied the tent and put clothes away and had gone to the cattle sheds to help prepare cows for showing. It being cold and miserable Dudley had left his pyjamas on under his chore pants for warmth. At show time Dudley rushed to the tent to get into his show whites



Dudley and Edward Bristow loading bales, 1966.



and couldn't find any underwear. Undaunted he tucked his pyjamas into his sock tops and went back to show his cattle. Soon there was tittering in the crowd that gradually grew to laughter. Dudley accepted his ribbon from the judge quite unaware that five inches of vivid red, white and blue pyjama leg was hanging below his white pants. Dudley claims he lost his first place ribbon to Ruth because of his improper show attire.

They both look back fondly on those days when you took your tent, your eats and your kids to the Fair, borrowed your neighbor's "vacuum cleaner" for the tent cleaning and were handed a broom and dust pan and often you were drowned out or blistered with the sun. All agreed the only way to enjoy a fair is to participate in the classes so that you would have some real interest in it.

Dudley was for many years an active community and church worker. He was president of the Home and School, trustee on the school board, chairman of the Trustee Association, a board member of the Beaverlodge Credit Union, and also on the Beaverlodge Co-op Store board. He was a member of the building committee that planned the store, also co-convenor of the dairy cattle for County Fair, interested in the Community Centre both with money and labor. He played a horn in the Beaverlodge band, sang in the choir, was superintendent of the United Church Sunday School and at times took the services at Halcourt and Elmworth for Rev. Gates and Rev. Fraser. Dudley often left his hat behind; at first Ruth would retrieve it, which meant a trip Monday morning. Once she decided against this trip. A week later when Dudley went to pick up his hat he found a nest of

mice using it for home and meals. When a neighbor was told of the incident he smiled and replied, "There are worse places to leave a hat."

One Sunday when Ruth was doing chores while Dudley was helping the minister, a big cow pinned her to the wall and squashed the pail she was using. Edward, about three years old, was sitting on the hay. To see if he was frightened Ruth asked him what he would do if Mother had to stay there all night. "Don't worry Mom! I'll bring you your breakfast." To compensate for the squashed pail she bought one at an auction sale. When Dudley went to use the newly purchased pail, he found it had a hole!

Both Dudley and Ruth have attended Seed Growers' Conventions, being members of long standing. They are also members of Uniform and its predecessors, the F.U.A. and F.W.U.A. and attended conventions as delegates.

The friendly Willow Lodge I.O.D.E. asked Ruth to join them. Ruth says she had all the jobs that were available in the club except treasurer — they just didn't trust her that far.

At Halliday's auction sale Ruth met Mrs. Victor Flint who, in course of conversation learned that the Bristows wouldn't have a cow on their farm that wasn't T.B. tested. From this conversation Ruth was induced to join the Farm Women's Organization (F.W.U.A.) at Lower Beaverlodge and through their resolutions the government was petitioned to create a T.B. free area at Beaverlodge — an act that was later granted.

The Bristows helped at the Beaverlodge Sports Days by running the children's races. Having had experience with school sports this was a natural with them and they had all the equipment ready. Neil Harris made Ruth bean bags from wheat and old denim for relays. She had all the ladies saving cotton stockings for the three-legged races — and kept her own supply of gunny sacks for the boys' races.

1952 Ruth returned to the class room and taught in Beaverlodge for 13 interesting years. She assisted at Teachers' institutes and conventions in science, mathematics and social studies.

Concerts and plays in the school were important. Ruth was extremely proud of a grade seven class which wrote, produced and acted out the history of Canada from the first settler in Newfoundland to the time of the Fathers of Confederation in which Lyle Truax starred as Sir John A. Macdonald. Ruth said all the class had put a real effort into the production and she was delighted with the results. She also recalled another play where Billy Baird played the leading role — a gentleman of the business world. Thinking to play the part more realistically and no doubt to add a bit of excitement for his teacher Billy — on the final night's performance swaggered across the stage smoking a real cigar, a grade eight play.

Dudley and Ruth's boys Edward and Stanley became farmers' helpers at an early age, planting trees, running farm machinery and milking cows. "No time to get into mischief", Dudley says.

Both boys took piano lessons from Margaret Anderson, and theory from Mary Carder and joined the Beaverlodge band. Like other boys they were active in



The Bristows at the County Fair, 1958.



The Bristow family.



Sunday School, Tyros and school athletics. Edward with his saxophone, Margaret Walker on the piano, Fred Archer on the trumpet, Gale McMurray on drums and Raymond Sanderson on the guitar, formed the first school orchestra in the new high school. Edward formed another orchestra at Fairview School of Agriculture and again belonged to one at university while attending there.

Both boys were active in the 4-H Dairy club and their heifers helped the Bristows develop their dairy herd. Edward and Stanley were selected delegates to represent their club at 4-H week both at Vermilion School of Agriculture and at Olds School of Agriculture.

The Bristows combined winnings at the Grande Prairie County Fair from 1960 to 1965 totalled 14 grand championships, 34 firsts, 22 seconds with many trophies as well.

Stanley and Edward worked in the summer months with the Plant Products Division on crop inspection. Edward attended Fairview Agricultural College before entering the University of Alberta where he obtained his B.Sc. in 1966. He worked for Federation Cooperative Ltd. until he joined the Alberta Government Dairy Branch staff as Dairy Production specialist. He married Gail Anderson of Lethbridge in 1967. Gail was a personnel officer at the A. G. Telephones after graduating from the U. of A. They have two children, Susan and James Edward.

In grade 12, Stanley always interested in athletics won the "Athlete of the Day" award in the South Peace Track meet in Grande Prairie with five first ribbons. He went on to University, obtained his B.Sc and worked as an assistant District Agriculturist at Bonnyville and at Woodstock, Ontario. He returned to the University of Alberta graduating from the faculty of medicine in 1972.

Stanley did his interning at London, Ontario where he took further studies. In 1970 he married Mary-Beth Bathwell of Owen Sound, a graduate in Household Economics. They plan to make their home in western Canada.

Looking back Ruth says there are two things that gave her great pleasure after she retired from teaching. One was their trip to Expo with the high school group in 1967 and the other was the day that about 150 junior and senior high school students, whom she had taught surprised her by quietly gathering on their lawn during their lunch hour and presenting her with a plaque and a tea cup in commemoration of her years with them. They sat down and ate their lunch on the lawn, leaving not a scrap to be picked up.

Looking to the future the Bristows hope they will never have to leave their home or friends at Beaverlodge but travel is definitely in mind.

#### WARREN AND DAISY BROWN

In 1898 a small boy came into the world in Edgin, Manitoba. This baby was given the name Warren by his parents, Edward and Hannah Brown. In 1902 this small family ventured forth to a new home in Fairfax, Manitoba where Warren's only sister Mona was born. The Browns still had the westward urge and they travelled toward the sunset, arriving near Redwater,

Alberta where they settled in 1908. Here Warren grew up in homestead fashion with his ambitious and community-minded parents. He was a hard working youth who joyed more in a hard days work than in seeking pleasure in towns.

In 1932 Warren married Daisy Walker of Redwater. Daisy had been born in Edmonton in 1909 but had taken all her schooling at Redwater. She grinned as she remembered Warren's folly-hunting! He put off their wedding day until he'd gotten his moose in the fall hunt. "A moose was more important than a bride!" chuckled Daisy.

After they were married they lived at Redwater for a couple of years and then tried homesteading at Smith — 50 miles north of Athabasca. Daisy can still remember with horror the trip they made to the homestead. There were no decent roads and the last 11 miles were off the highway and up a steep hill at Waugh. It was raining and the road was so slippery that the horses couldn't keep their feet. Daisy had four month old baby Jim along and she climbed off the load, laid Jim on the side and tried to block the wheels but the load was too heavy. Little by little the load was pulling the horses backwards until finally the wagon reach broke and the whole load upset over the side of the hill. They had to make the best of that by putting up a tarpaulin for shelter and huddling under it with the baby until daylight and the next day when they could see to fix the reach and try the hill again. Daisy thought that had been her most frightening experience.

To get to their shack they had also to cross a creek where beavers had built a dam. The only place to cross was on the dam itself — imagine if you can a team of horses and a wagon crossing on a beaver dam. One horse fell through and caused poor Daisy a few more grey hairs.

They stayed on the homestead only one year as Warren's father became ill and Warren was needed at Redwater. They farmed at Redwater from 1938-1951. Along with farming and community and neighbourly toil, Daisy and Warren also found time to raise four children, James, Gladys, Edward and Murray.

Warren was the first man at Redwater to have a car and Daisy says that they always had a car and enough money to use it. He also had a big steel-wheeled tractor. Daisy did her share of the farming by discing and harrowing with the big brute — it was just all she could do to turn it. And she explained about pitching bundles for stacking and how she'd be the one to top off the stacks because she couldn't pitch the bundles up that high. This couple struggled through the hardships and the joys of frontier life and gave their best to the community of Redwater.

During those years they managed to make several trips north to Beaverlodge to visit relations, the Walkers and found themselves becoming attached to the beautiful Peace River country. Eventually in 1951 they bought the George Harris farm two miles west of Beaverlodge. On April 16th, a snowy miserable day, the Browns arrived in their 1949 Chev car, as far as town. Getting out to the farm at that time was another matter as the road way was blocked with snow from



fence to fence. There was a trail inside the field through Bristow's place down to the Harris farm. The Browns and the folks attending Harris's sale used it that day. That horrible sea of mud was the Browns initiation to Beaverlodge.

Eventually Warren's cattle, machinery and household belongings arrived by freight train and the hard job of unloading and moving was under way. Moe Sandage and Harold Attwood came on the same freight train.

The Brown's lives developed around the community, their agricultural activities reaped an average income with its joys and pitfalls. While residing on their farm, which lies along the Beaverlodge river, one spring, flooding was caused by the construction of the beavers. The forest warden gave permission to the Dolemo brothers of Valhalla to trap the little rascals and transport them to lakes in their area.

Warren was a hunting enthusiast. Many evenings during duck hunting season he could be found by a pot hole with his 12 gauge shotgun. He was given the name of "Pot Hole Sam" and ever afterwards was known as Sam.

One evening in the fall, (unknown to Warren) neighbour Walter Willis had bought tame geese. Warren looked out the window and saw them. Away he goes with his trusty 12-gauge — two of Walter's geese were down. Too late, Warren realized his mistake. That night Walter was presented with two cleaned geese ready for the oven. The Browns ended up enjoying one for Thanksgiving. They are still the best of neighbours.

Daisy recalls that her boys had guns too. One day shots in the house brought her promptly to the boys' bedroom door. Here she found they had started by trying to shoot a fly but had ended trying to see if they could enlarge the holes they had made in the corner. The boys had their horses and like many another family their horse was used to pull the garden cultivator with boys astride the horse to drive it — or the walking plow to plant the potatoes.

One day the cattle were suddenly frightened into stampeding by a huge black bear. The cattle were across the river on the Stone place and Dudley Bristow and Eddie set off to see what they could do. Eddie finally shot the bear and they hauled the carcass off to one of Eddie's west quarters. Here it lay disintegrating with a pungent odor. But Ruth and Daisy got to thinking about those bear claws. The temptation was too much! In spite of the stench they collected the claws easily as the flesh was rotted and the claws fell off. Margaret Harris cleaned them up, put them on leather thongs and sold them to young people for good luck charms — all for a worthy cause — the I.O.D.E.

The Browns had a three-foot cable foot bridge across the river. Warren had built it because they had their garden across the river. One day Jim came rolling swiftly down the hill to the foot-bridge on his bicycle — very cocksure! Half-way across he went over the side and landed in the water still sitting astride his bicycle while his tin hat floated away downstream. A cooling off period, Jim?

The Browns were active community members —

Daisy at least! She joined the Willow Lodge I.O.D.E. in 1952, the A.C.W. of the Anglican Church and the Royal Purple. She has also been the lady to see when you want to make a contribution to the Heart Fund, the Cancer Fund or to the Red Cross and is a faithful church attender — also a director of the Cemetery Co.

In 1967 Warren died. Daisy who had been working as a Ward Aide at the hospital for four years had left her work to give her husband her full attention. Since then she has been working in the post office, retiring in 1973.

Anyone who knows Daisy knows her cheery smile and hearty greeting. They also know that she and her car are inseparable. Daisy tells us she loves to "just get out and go". After a day of too much company a drive in the country unties the knots. Long trips are her thing and she has been to England, Wales, Holland and Hawaii. She doesn't care how she goes — on wheels or wings — just let her go! Her two favorite hobbies are quilt making, washing and carding her own wool, and hooking rag rugs, both arts her mother-in-law taught her in her early days of marriage.

The Browns have four children, all of whom are married — Jim to Kitty Maxine Willard, Gladys to Albert Eggenberger of Manning, Eddie to Marion Carty and Murray to Lynne Bruder. Gladys and family are at Yellowknife N.W.T., the boys and their families are all in the Beaverlodge area — all around the wheel's hub — our Daisy!

#### WILLIAM CAMPBELL

William (Scotty) Campbell was born in Campbeltown, Scotland, a west coast port. For a time he was an overseer on a large estate. He was a good groomsman and was excellent at braiding horses' manes. Before coming to Canada he worked in a distillery.

In 1910 he married Elizabeth Cook, also of Campbeltown. They came to Red Deer in 1927 and Beaverlodge in 1928. An ankle injury disqualified him for service in World War I but he served as an volunteer, thereby qualifying for S.S.B. benefits.

Scotty Campbell attended all political rallies and



William and Elizabeth Campbell.



frequently was a persistent and vociferous heckler for he had definite opinions on the way the country should be run.

In her later years "Granny" Campbell was very active in the Golden Age Club. William died in 1948, Elizabeth in 1972.

One daughter, Catherine married Jack Harcourt and resides in Beaverlodge. Her sister, Jean married Merlin Ray and they operate the Bus Depot at Chetwynd, B.C.

### THE PAT CARRELL STORY

I, Pat Carrell was born on the banks of the Beaverlodge river, March 17, 1923.

I attended public and high school at Beaverlodge in the "new brick school" which has since been torn down. I graduated from the Olds School of Agriculture in April of 1944.

One of my first jobs, the fall I was 17 was hauling bundles for Percy and Verne Johnson as part of the threshing crew. I was happy to receive the going wage of \$3.00 a day.

I farmed in partnership with my father, Ralph and brother, Don until 1950. Together we bought our first tractor in 1943 to supplement our "horse" power. Our main crop was oats and we put up a lot of hay.

In the fall of 1945 I bought Bert Elcome's soldier grant, S.E. 34-71-10-W6. I began building a house there the next spring, amid a lot of kidding about finding a girl to fit the kitchen sink.

In 1949 we bought Ed Hogg's cattle and dairy equipment and began operation of the Beaverlodge Dairy, retailing and delivering milk in town. I added pasteurization equipment in 1952. I did this until 1956, then sold milk to the Northern Alberta Dairy Pool until 1965. I now farm on a small scale and work at the Research Station.

I have always been involved in community activities and sports, including Scouts which I joined in 1936 under the leadership of Bert Sumner. I was a member of the troop for five years and then had two three-year turns as a leader. I am now a helping parent.

I played hockey until 1949. While in Juniors we would go to Hythe on a Saturday by team and sleigh or commute by N.A.R. which gave us time to play a game between the 4:00 and 10:00 p.m. train. By 17 I was playing with the Beaverlodge Blue Bombers. I'm now a hockey parent and helped coach the past two winters.

I joined the Beaverlodge Band in 1938 playing either trumpet or baritone until 1950. I rejoined in 1965, and the girls have joined since that time. We have had a great deal of fun with music in our home and the boys are now learning how to play.

I played trumpet and sometimes violin in dance orchestras for about five years. The original group was organized by Nick Smashnuk. Our last pianist was the late Peter Harris.

I also am involved in the Elks and the United Church.

I married Patricia Wilson of Goodfare, a teacher, in 1950. She has been an active member of the O.O.R.P. and in the United church where she was in-

involved in Sunday School and U.C.W. She does a lot of "sub" teaching at the local schools.

We are raising five children. Beth is taking a C.N.A. course in Edmonton; Joan has begun her R.N. at the University hospital; Judy, Jack and Dick are still at school.

On a sunny beautiful July 1, 1964 after a week of rain we awoke to find the river out of its banks and rapidly surrounding three sides of the house. There was soon a good current making its way across the potato patch and I used the canoe to go to the barn to milk. We managed to keep the water out of the basement. After the water had receded all that was needed was to push a little soil around the potato plants. The water came up again August 14, 1964 and July 16, 1965.

And then there was the time when practicing on a Sunday afternoon off the front porch on a rather high pair of stilts for a clown act for the Annual May 24 parade a neighbor drove by. Later when she met my sister-in-law Fran she asked "... and does he do that sort of thing often?" Other such activities include the training of the family "herd sire" and driving him in the May 24 parade, nostalgic of former times.

### MR. AND MRS. RALPH FLYNN CARRELL

Though born in Nebraska, Ralph Carrell came from California to Vancouver by boat in January 1913, accompanied by his stepfather Elisha Simpson. On the boat they met Jake Glessner, who joined them. The three travelled by train to Calgary, prospecting that district and also the Edmonton area. Here they met Dick Knight with his ten horses and wagon of gear. Ralph sold the ponies he had bought in Edmonton and became a horse wrangler for Dick. Jake was the cook. The fourth member in their party, Ralph's stepfather "just had it soft and easy" says Ralph.

They left Edson May 25, 1913 and landed in Grande Prairie June 24 a month later. They went slowly, averaging eight miles per day, enduring no hardships, not even the loss of a horse. Ralph left his personal belongings in Edson and picked them up the next winter.

On the trail they met several colorful characters such as "Goldie" and his partner. They travelled with them most of the way and assisted them as far as Sturgeon Lake. Also they met Tissington who had lost his four horses near House river. Ralph trailed and found them for him. He tied them up and went back to camp to barter. Much later and presumably after much search the horses were led into camp and a generous supply of oats was the payment. "Baldy Red" passed them and arrived ahead in Sturgeon Lake where they later had a warm welcome.

From Grande Prairie they went to Buffalo Lakes and then to Lake Saskatoon July 1st Sports. Here Ralph got acquainted, through baseball playing, with the Beaverlodge team. His fame soon spread and in the following years he was a noted sportsman not only as a hitter in baseball but also track and field.

Ralph and Elisha homesteaded on a half on the Beaverlodge river just south of the present town site.

During the summer of 1913 Ralph worked for C.O. Pool. In the fall he was in charge of a company threshing machine for 90 days which worked not only

in the Beaverlodge area but also Buffalo Lakes and Sexsmith. He hired out for \$2.00 a day but they raised it to \$3.00 at the end when they sold the outfit after a profitable season.

Ralph cut a picture of Ruth Johnson, a girl he had not met yet from Pinky Newgard's photo album. On October 22, 1915 he married her and still carries that treasured picture in his purse. Their marriage was the first entered in the marriage book of the Beaverlodge Methodist Church.

Ruth (Johnson) Carrell at 16 drove a team over the Athabasca long trail with her father Oliver (Rutabaga) Johnson and his family in 1909. She was the first single white woman in the area. She was catcher for the Beaverlodge Girls' hard ball team, basketball player and donut baker for 24th May sports. Ruth was also endowed with a strong alto voice. She harmonized with Ralph, Effie Flint and Harry Newgard, a noted quartet for church openings and socials.

On their honeymoon in Washington, U.S. Ralph encouraged his relatives to homestead in the Beaverlodge area. His youngest brother, Harry returned in the spring of 1916 with them. Harry married Anna, Ruth's younger sister. Their family, Wilma, Wanda, Olive and Ted were all born here but left in 1928 for Washington. Harry resided there until his death in 1973.

By 1917 the rest of Ralph's relatives came by train with settlers' effects. They were: Olive (Mother), Grandma Sarah Hubbard (Olive Carrell's mother), one legged brother John (a musician and painter), sister Edna (widow) and two daughters Vera and Verna, three younger brothers Joy, Clarence (Bud), and D'Rollin (Doc). They all left after a short time.



Ralph and Ruth Carrell's 50th anniversary. 1965.



Two newcomers to the Peace. Ralph Carrell and "Dutch Oven" Jake Glesner talk over location prospects with Dave McCarter, five miles

southwest of Beaverlodge 1913.



Ruth and Ralph have four children, Gwendolyn, Iva, George (Pat), and Don. Gwen born in 1917 rode her white horse, "Old Blazer" to the log school on the Beaverlodge hill. Later when the family lived out west at the Hay camp she attended Gimle school. She worked in the old Maternity hospital before leaving for her nurse's training in Yakima Valley, Washington. There she married James Doak, a teacher. For many years Gwen nursed at the Selah hospital for the retarded, until her sudden death December 31, 1973. Iva, a school teacher, married Raymond Foster of Sexsmith in 1945. They have four children and she still resides on the original Foster farm.

The two sons Pat and Don remained in the Beaverlodge area to raise families. Pat attended Olds Agricultural school, married Eleanor (Patsy) Wilson of Goodfare and is employed at the Beaverlodge Research Station. Don joined the R.C.A.F. when 17, married Frances Henderson of Hythe, granddaughter of "Ma" Brainard. They operate an apiary at Goodfare.

Over the years Ruth was active in church work, superintendent of the Sunday School and a life member in the Women's Mission Society. Ralph favored his Elks and baseball. He was exalted ruler, District Deputy and Alberta President of the B.P.O.E. Since 1934 he has been a Sunshine member visiting the hospital with treats, a record of 40 years in 1974. At the ball park there is a reserved seat for the long-time catcher and outfielder. "Baseball is still my favorite," Ralph exclaims.

At 87 Ralph isn't ready to retire. He is still acting bailiff and many seek his counsel in legal affairs and courts.

#### ROSS CAWSTON

Ross married Gina Whyte in Manitoba and they came to Beaverlodge from Vegreville. Ross was in partnership with R. C. Lossing in the Old Town with a Massey Harris agency. Later he farmed the Rede Stone land where Austin Willis now lives and died suddenly of a heart attack in 1932.

Gina was well known for her light heartedness and for playing the violin. For a time Beaverlodge danced to her music, with Bert Funnell or Bill Johnson at the piano and Joe Barrett on another violin. Gina could always be counted on to decorate a banquet table elegantly.

There were two children, Lois married Robert Pharis of High River. She now teaches at Duncan but lives on Salt Spring Island. In high school days she and Maxine (Olson) Davis sang at concerts. Bob died in 1970. There are four children. Debra, married, has one child. Brian dropped out of university because of illness. Blaine is completing high school and Lisa is in elementary school.

Barrie married Bessie Gillard and is with the B.C. Hydro at Vernon, B.C. Bessie is teaching. They have three boys and a girl: Jeffrey, Douglas, Kevin and Suzanne.

#### ED CARLSON

Ed came in about the same time as Jim Bauman. Previously he had been a railroad fireman. He smoked

a pipe and always carried a "cut-plug" of tobacco in his hip pocket. When wanting a smoke he would slice off the tobacco with a well trimmed nail on his right thumb, quite an accomplishment.

Ed held one philosophy: "You slave and work all your life only to be the richest man in the grave yard".

#### BOOTH COOK

Booth Cook has an extensive record of service in World War I. At age 23 he enlisted in the 68th Battalion at Regina and was transferred to the 128th Battalion of Moose Jaw. His unit reached England in the spring of 1916 and participated in the battle of Vimy Ridge and the retreat from Mons. He was in every advance in which the Canadians participated. He lost his brother, Ellis Angus Cook at Lens.

Booth's unit was at Mons on Armistice Day and was promptly sent to Bonn, 220 miles away, with soldiers carrying 120 pound packs. He remained in the Army of Occupation for two months guarding bridges and barges, and was then returned to England. He was discharged at Regina with the rank of sergeant.

Booth was born in Prescott County, Ontario in 1891. His father came from Belfast, Ireland and his mother from Glasgow, Scotland. He commenced farming near Prescott and in 1906 moved to Stroughton, Saskatchewan, 50 miles east of Regina. On his discharge from the army, Booth returned to Stroughton. Later he bought a farm two miles north of Indian Head, then sold out and bought a half section at Fillmore, near Stroughton, which he held until 1928, with a sad record of hail and frost.

In 1928 he came to Beaverlodge to homestead. In World War II he spent four years with the RCAF Service Police. In 1954 he married Mabel Sims. Booth is a life member of the Elks and the Canadian Legion.

Mabel had one daughter by a previous marriage, Mrs. Doris Pendelton of Florida.

#### GORDON COOK — by Thelma McLean

Gordon Cook was born in Ontario. As a small child he came to Saskatchewan with his parents and they settled in Stoughton to begin farming operations.

In 1914, dad like so many others, joined the armed services and was soon in England. After four years duty, he was honorably discharged and returned to resume farming on his own, under the Soldiers' Settlement Act.

At this time he met and married Annie Pyrke who had lost her husband in France in 1916. They farmed in Saskatchewan until 1928. Articles by W. D. Albright were appearing in the farm press about the Peace River country and the opportunities it offered. A letter was written to Mr. Albright and promptly answered, urging them to come to the Beaverlodge district. He promised living quarters on land owned by him east of Beaverlodge until a homestead could be filed on. So in the spring of 1928, two carloads of machinery and livestock were loaded in Osage, Saskatchewan and after two weeks by freight train they arrived at Wembley, the end of steel.

A homestead was filed on and in 1929 a log house was built and we moved in. This land is eight miles north of Beaverlodge on the Valhalla-Beaverlodge

road. Here we made our home until 1967 when poor health forced Dad to sell the farm and to retire in Beaverlodge.

While living on the homestead, I can recall all the happy times we had, and the many, many people to whom mother gave meals and lodgings while lumber was being hauled from the mills north of Valhalla Center.

Gordon, the eldest son and better known as Teddy, served four years overseas with the army. On his return he met and married Sigrid Aastveit. They now live in Grande Prairie and have two sons.

Ethel married David Roberts who was then a telegraph operator. They live in Grande Prairie and have one daughter.

### HENRY CRABB

New Zealand must have seemed a long way off for Henry Crabb when he and his daughter, Nellie, arrived August 1909 to homestead. Perhaps this entry into a New World explains his outfit, a narrow-gauge wagon, powered by a team of Holstein cows. Loaded was a 12-inch Verity walking plough and two crates, one containing two calves and the other a dozen chickens. A Collie dog completed the entourage. In Edmonton the cows were hitched to a wagon and when they settled to a walk they were considered broken.

Life on the trail was simple, the chickens were let out each evening to dust and feed and the cows were milked. Thus the outfit produced its own butter, eggs, milk and cream. The surplus was sold and the proceeds bought flour.

The Crabbs settled on adjoining land held by J. M. Miller and his father-in-law, William Crabbe, members of the Bull Outfit. Thus it became inevitable that "Cow" Crabb should be distinguished from "Bull" Crabbe.

Nellie busied herself with housework and is remembered for knitting mitts, socks and ties. Her father hauled building logs from Saskatoon Mountain, broke 28 acres of land with the two cows in two years, then moved out.

### THE WILLIAM CRABBE AND JOHN MACKLIN MILLER FAMILIES

Near Brantford, Ontario Mac Miller was raised on a farm to which registered Clydesdale horses were imported from Scotland by his father. They trained and showed the horses at Toronto Fairs before selling them and were known as good horsemen.

In 1909 Mac and his wife decided to sell their farm and give up work at a local flour mill, to join a group who were leaving Ontario to start a new life in Alberta. Like themselves, the group belonged to the Christian Association and planned to make it a co-operative venture.

William and Ester Crabbe, aged 69 and 63 were Mrs. Miller's parents, and also members of the Christian Association. They too sold their market garden to go west. Ester was their only child and it seems probably they were reluctant to be parted from her and their four grandchildren — Albert (13), Fred (9), Clifton (6) and baby Mary (3).

The group of 25 arrived in Edmonton in March,



The Miller Brothers, Albert, Fred, Cliff and Sam.



Cliff and Beatrice Miller and daughter, 1931.



1909. Six others had joined the group and collectively they gathered together oxen, equipment and a year's supply of life's necessities for a 450-mile trip to the Beaverlodge Valley in the Peace River country. When the 18 teams of oxen and one horse and buggy left Edmonton, they were dubbed the Bull Outfit and the name stuck. Their story is elsewhere.

The Millers and Crabbes chose homesteads and scrips with the Robert Lossings and Flint Brothers as near neighbors. Their first crop was broadcast by hand, cut with a cradle, tied by hand and stooked. Other years a co-operatively-owned binder was used until they could purchase their own. They benefitted from the Bull Outfit's steam threshing machine also and when the group bought a flour mill it was located on Camp Creek on Mac Miller's homestead. With previous milling experience, Mac was put in charge. Mrs. Miller is supposed to have been asked why she married a miller, and she replied, "Oh, I got tired of being a crab. I wanted to get up in the world."

The Beaverlodge school opened in November 1910 with three Miller boys among its first pupils. A fourth son, Sam was born after the family arrived in Beaverlodge.

The Millers and Crabbes were a happy group, enjoying family jokes and fun, some of which Cliff recalled in later years. One was a verse his grandfather often quoted:

"A man alone an ox can drive  
To a springing well,  
He may think to make him drink  
But no man can him compel."

And a saying of his mother's:

"We are only young once, which makes it rough,  
But if we handle it right, once is enough."

Cliff saw his father and grandmother dance a waltz once, while his grandmother held a jug of water on her head. No small accomplishment! And he remembered the time his grandfather's ox, Buck fell into a large hole being dug for a well. There was little seepage mixed with the gumbo which formed a heavy crust on the poor ox and it took Grandpa Crabbe a week to clean it off. The ox's name was changed to "Gummy". Then, while the family was looking for stray animals in a heavy fog, Mother Miller also fell in the hole and the children teasingly called her "Gummy" too.

The children knocking on the door, begging for more cookies while their mother was washing the floor, was another memory. Exasperated with the interruptions, she threatened to use the mop on them. One more knock, and out came the mop — into the face of Ralph Carrell who had just come to the door. It had to end in laughter.

One time Mr. Crabbe and Mac were asked to witness a homesteader's oath declaring his homestead improvements. Mac had done some plowing for the man. They were not present when the declaration was made — a fine house, warm in winter and cool in summer; also a fine barn; and that breaking was around 160 acres. When the inspector read out these improvements to the surprised men, they refused to sign. The house was really a sod shack and the stable a kind of hut. The breaking? The four or five furrows



Macklin Miller.

Mac had plowed AROUND the quarter! In a manner of speaking, of course, the man had told the truth in this instance.

Then there was the time a Hallowe'en masquerade dance was to be held in Beaverlodge. Mrs. Miller was going as an Indian squaw. As her father was putting the cows in the barn before supper, she slipped into her costume and appeared around the corner of the barn. In a changed voice she asked, "Have you seen my cows?" Grandpa Crabbe grabbed a stick and told her to get away from there. "I know nothing of your cows!" She thought he was about to strike her so left, going away from the house. He watched till she was out of sight, then went back to his chores, which gave her a chance to slip back into the house, laughing near tears. At supper he mentioned the incident, wondering why a squaw would have cows. The children could hardly contain their giggles. At the dance, when the unmasking took place, Grandpa recognized the "squaw" and thundered, "Holy Hanna! To think my own daughter would do such a thing!"

Mac is reported to have said he would never hire a man who wore high-topped boots and a big hat, for while he was lacing up his boots, his hat could blow away and he would spend too much time chasing it!

Cliff remembered a young man who drove a nice team and buggy, trying to court their sister, Mary. Fred and he didn't like him, and filled the space under the lid, behind the seat with pig manure. The man never returned.

Ed Carlson's thumbnail fascinated the young boy. With it kept long and very sharp, Mr. Carlson could swiftly and efficiently cut a pipeful of tobacco from a large plug which he carried in his hip pocket. The same man, when talking of wages, is reported to have asked, "Slave and work all your life — only to be the richest man in the graveyard?"

A school day incident was recalled. "Apparently I had a loose patch on my little britches and as I was

walking past 'Grandma Lossings', she called me in. She had a needle and thread ready and took me over her knee and sewed on the patch, and away I went."

Mrs. Crabbe reached the age of 79 before she passed away in 1925. Mr. Crabbe outlived her by several years, and died at the ripe age of 92 in 1932.

Albert served in World War I, and farmed the former Garnet Truax homestead, just south of the old town of Beaverlodge.

Fred served in World War II, made his home in the Elmworth district, and married Florence Oakford. He was buried in the Beaverlodge cemetery in 1962.

Cliff married Beatrice Snider of Beaverlodge and farmed in the Homestead district, then they operated a restaurant at Valhalla Centre for a short while before leaving for mill work at Prince George. They retired at Quesnel, where Cliff died in 1972.

Mary and Sam have also passed on.

There are many descendants of the William Crabbes and Mac Millers, many of whom still live in the South Peace region. The late W. D. Albright said at Mr. Crabbe's funeral, "He lived in a house by the side of the road, and was a friend to man." What more could be asked?

## ROBERT CRAMER

I was born in Carberry, Manitoba in August 1921. In 1929 the family moved to Whitburn area, near Spirit River. Mother, dad, two sisters and myself came by passenger train; two older brothers rode the box car with our settlers' effects. Another brother was already here when we came. The next year we brought mother's parents, Grandma and Grandpa Hughes to make their home with us. They lived in a log house in our yard until their deaths some years later.

When we first came to the country the roads were mere trails with long stretches of corduroy over the worst places. The journey from Spirit River to Whitburn in a lumber wagon was very tiresome to a small boy and I kept asking my older brother "How much farther is it?" and he would answer "Home is just around the next bend."

There was no way for me to go to school until I was 11 years old, then I went and stayed with my sister at Spirit River until I had to come home to help dad on the farm, after the war broke out. I remember one year when the rabbits were so thick they ate everything in sight and destroyed small trees and plants. The carcasses could be sold for mink feed and I got more for my wagon load of rabbits than dad got for his load of wheat.

In June 1943 I married Jean Farnsworth of LaGlacé. The first year we made our home in the log house left by Grandma and Grandpa Hughes at Whitburn. The next winter we moved to a sawmill at Bay Tree. We rented the farm of Stan Tompkins at Bear Creek. There was no school and Jean taught the two oldest children by correspondence for four years. In 1948 I took out an agriculture lease and farmed it until 1954. The next four years we spent at Watino farming rented land. We moved to Beaverlodge in 1959 and bought land from Mrs. Fred Albright, a sister-in-law of W. D. Albright.

We have settled down here quite comfortably. We

bought a portable sawmill and after rebuilding it sawed enough lumber off the farm to build our house, using the family labor. We have had some success raising potatoes, making our own planter and digger. At one time I raised sheep on my farm. I am employed at the Agricultural Research Station in Beaverlodge.

We have a family of five children. Thomas was born in January 1945. He married Linda Rueckert of Elmworth and works at Cominco Mines, NWT. Louise, born in December, 1945, married Don Line of Red Deer. They are now living at Grovedale, and Don works for Canfor. Louise is a cook.

Charlie was born in March 1950. He married Evelyn Shadeck. Their home is in Wembley and Charlie works for Proctor and Gamble as a lab technician.

Jim, born in May 1952 is now married to Janice Campbell and they also live in Wembley. Jim works for Canfor as a millwright.

Jerri Lynn, our baby, was born in 1963 and is in school.

We have four grandchildren, two girls and two boys.



The Robert Cramer family: Tom, Bob, Jim, Charlie, Jean, Jerri Lynn and Louise.

## DONALD C. CRANSTON — by Verne Johnson

Don Cranston, a young man of 20 years, born at Galt and raised in Toronto, was working in Grand & Toy's stationery store on Yonge St. when he heard of the Peace River country through the Burnsites. These people were organizing a trek to Alberta to secure farm land and Don for some inexplicable reason decided to join them. He joined with this group, now commonly known as the Bull Outfit, with his team of oxen going from Edmonton to Beaverlodge in 1909. He homesteaded N.E. of 3-72-10 and obtained the N½ of 2-72-10 as a South African Scrip.

Don and his friend Garnet Truax cut logs and built themselves shacks and barns on their land. To overcome the solitude and loneliness, they lived and worked together for a few years. He made several annual trips by ox team to Edmonton and later to Edson in midwinter to purchase supplies.

However, he did not work all the time, for even in those days Beaverlodge had a baseball team and Don loved to play. He also found that Oliver "Rutabaga" Johnson had several charming daughters, especially one, Elizabeth, a brunette who was teaching the school.





"Saint's Rest" Home for Garnet Truax and Don Cranston. C. O. Pool laid the corner stone. Garnet in the doorway.

By 1914 Don had approached Mr. Johnson, asking for his daughter in marriage. Mr. Johnson's reply was never forgotten, "It's all right with me — you are the one that is going to have to live with her!" This was the first marriage in the district, Rev. C. F. Hopkins officiated.

This necessitated the construction of a more elaborate house and more buildings, all of log, and here on the N.E. of 2-72-10 Don and Elizabeth set up housekeeping. One of their prized possessions was a phonograph and a good supply of records, a real treat in that pioneer community.

The Cranstons had two pet pigs which followed them about the farm. One Sunday morning when they were walking down to church they discovered their pets behind them. After shooing them back, they continued on their way. To their horror the little pigs walked in the open door in the middle of the service.

In the meantime Don's younger brother Harry had arrived from Toronto and was helping with the farming. Don built a frame house in the old town of Beaverlodge and clerked in the I. E. Gaudin store.

In 1916, Don and Elizabeth decided to return to Toronto. Don was really never a farmer at heart and besides Elizabeth was expecting, so it seemed a good time to return to the city.

In Toronto he returned to Grand & Toy's Store where he worked for many years, becoming the manager.

He had many stories of his experiences in the West to tell to his friends. It so happened that one day a dray team with a heavy load got into trouble on Yonge Street and the team refused to pull. Don's friends in the store reminded him of his alleged prowess as a teamster and challenged him to take over. With some trepidation, Don approached the driver and offered to help. In astonishment and with some reluctance the driver turned over the reins. Don calmed the team and to his great amazement and satisfaction, pulled the load away.

#### **HARRY CRANSTON — by Verne Johnson**

Harry Cranston came to Beaverlodge in 1911 and

filed on the N.W. 27-70-1 for a homestead. He was 18 years old, born and raised in Toronto, with no experience whatever in pioneering. However, his brother Don had preceded him here by two years, which made things a bit of a lark for Harry.

Harry was a great athlete, an outstanding runner, and an ardent lover of baseball and hockey. In those pioneer days it was not uncommon to drive as far as Spirit River to a "sports" and Harry took them all in and became well known as a runner.

In 1916 Hazel Reynolds came from Oklahoma to visit her sister Maude, Mrs. Arnold Johnson and she and Harry fell in love. Along with others they went to Grande Prairie to the July 1st sports, and Harry and Hazel eloped. Their honeymoon was spent at the sports in a tent in driving rain. Harry won no races that day.

When his brother Don left this area later in the year, Harry rented his farm and established an excellent herd of Holstein cows. He and Hazel worked hard and made a success of their farming venture. In the meantime he had sold his homestead to the Carrell Bros.

However, in the winter of 1920, while everyone was at a concert in the old town of Beaverlodge their house and all their belongings were lost by fire. Harry spent the rest of the winter commuting from neighbors to attend his stock and the next spring they moved to the S.W. 4-72-10 on the Beaverlodge river, which he had purchased. By this time he and Hazel had two children, Dorothy and Frederick. They carried on with their dairy farm until 1922 when they sold out and moved to Alameda, California where Harry became a plumber, and went into business with his brother, Russell.

In 1962, after forty years, Harry and Hazel returned to Beaverlodge to visit relatives and old friends and renew nostalgic memories. They are living in Alameda and in reasonably good health.

#### **DRAKE-WILKIE — by Verne Johnson**

Chester A. Drake and his wife May came from Ontario to Beaverlodge with the "Bull Outfit", arriving here in 1909. When this district was surveyed in 1910, they filed on the N½ of 1 and the S.E. of 14-72-10 — the former being directly east of the present town of Beaverlodge. Mr. Drake was in poor health and died in 1910. His burial was the first in the Beaverlodge cemetery. Mrs. Drake stayed on the farm and taught the first Beaverlodge school.

James Wilkie arrived on the scene in 1913, homesteading the N.W. of 22-71-9. He was also a teacher and presided at the Lower Beaverlodge school.

He and Mrs. Drake met and as they had mutual interests, romance bloomed. They were married about 1915.

They farmed the land east of Beaverlodge until 1945, when they sold the farm and retired to Haney, B.C., moving by Model A. Ford. Mrs. Wilkie passed away in 1948, and Mr. Wilkie some years later.

They will always be remembered as honest, kind, considerate people — a credit, an asset to the pioneer community.

## PETER DUECK

Peter Dueck came from the Ukraine. During World War II, when the German invasion was checked and the army retreating the people of Peter's village had a chance to leave.

At this time Peter was attending school in Poland and lost track of his family. So he and a friend, Peter Penner who is now principal of the school at Debolt found their way to West Germany.

There they got work on a farm and apprenticed for three years. Then they applied to come to Canada to get land and farm. The Canadian agents and doctors made the necessary arrangements and in about three months they were on their way. Peter, sponsored by the government was placed with Albert Miller for one year where he worked for only a small wage to repay the government. He had to learn English and he got help in this from Otto Hanson and the Miller boys.

Later he worked for Austin Willis and John Martin, gaining experience in farming and getting equipment to clear land. He also worked on road construction in the north, operating heavy machinery. Eventually he bought a gravel truck which he traded to Roy Brown as payment on a quarter of land. In time he bought three more quarters.

In 1956 he married Lois Gray of Valhalla. They bought a trailer and lived in it on their farm until their new house was built in 1959. They now have a prosperous and well-equipped farm.

The Duecks have three children, Marilyn, Terry and Linda who are at present attending school in Beaverlodge.

After 12 years and with the help of the Red Cross, Peter has been able to get in touch with his mother and sisters, but there is no trace of his father and brother.

## FRANK FORDYCE

Mr. Francis Fordyce of Scottish nationality, his wife Isabel of Norwegian descent and their family arrived in the Peace River region from Vantage, Saskatchewan in 1928 by car. They came with the Rusty Olsons.

They farmed a half section one mile south of the Experimental Farm and a quarter in the Two River district. Many good times were had at Huallen, also in neighbors' homes and in the Mountain Trail school.

Some of their family received schooling at Beaverlodge, while others finished in Dawson Creek, Kelowna and the Notre Dame Business School, Vancouver. The move to Dawson Creek was made in 1942 when they sold their farm. There he worked for the army until his retirement. He died in 1972.

Mrs. Fordyce resides in her own home in Dawson Creek, B.C. All her family are married and have families. Three of them, Donalda, Francis and Kenneth have lived in Dawson Creek.

Eunice resides in Los Angeles and Merle and Ione live in Edmonton.

## THE GERALD FAMILY

The original settlers on the present Henry Lunam land was a family by the name of Gerald or Jarrold. He was a Cockney who strove to augment his income by doing blacksmith work at home and in the Old

Town. Mrs. Gerald worked as best she could after caring for her family.

One of the boys was almost blind and neighbours recall him carrying water from the C.O. Pool place in a little pail.

## ELLEN AND HAROLD GRAF

On October 25, 1940 Ellen Scorgie and Harold Graf were married. Ellen, the first white child born south of the Red Willow river was the eldest daughter of Violette and William Scorgie.

They lived at Halcourt for three years and then bought land north of Beaverlodge. In 1947 they moved to Beaverlodge and have farmed there since.

When they lived at Hinton Trail Ellen participated in community activities. She has continued to do so in Beaverlodge, whether chairing a meeting, planning and arranging an activity for sports days, church or 4-H. When the U.C.W. has a booth on May 24th or July 1st, Ellen will share the effort. The 4-H Sew's and Sew's have appreciated her helpful leadership.

They have three daughters, Marlene, Linda and Jackie.

Marlene was born in Beaverlodge in 1945. She received her education in the Beaverlodge schools and took a business course in Grande Prairie after which she worked for Alberta Government Telephones. She married Stan Steinke in 1967 and they have one son, Tim. Stan is a heavy equipment operator for the County of Grande Prairie No. 1.

Linda was born in Beaverlodge in 1951. She also received her education in the Beaverlodge schools. After her education she worked for Sargent Motors and Curry's Jewellers Ltd., before she married Tom Metcalf in 1971. They lived in Grande Prairie until they bought his mother's farm at Haven. Tom is a log truck driver and heavy equipment operator.

Jackie was also born in Beaverlodge in 1961. She is presently attending the Hythe Regional high school.

## JACK HARCOURT

John Ratcliffe Harcourt married Catherine Campbell in 1937 and rented Mrs. Robert Stone's farm along the Beaverlodge river. Two years later they

Jack Harcourt. The first day on homestead, Sunrise Valley, 1929.





moved to the Experimental Farm where they lived until 1947 when they established permanent quarters immediately east of the Farm.

Perhaps Jack's big event was when, with the aid of Cliff Biesel and Bill McClymont, he outfitted a matched four horse team of black Percheron horses, set off with "Scotch Tops" borrowed from Miller Patterson and Cliff Biesel and proudly drove them in the Grande Prairie Fair parade. Needless to say, the entry took first prize in the Fair.

Over the years Jack has operated the local yard of the Peace River Livestock Co-operative Ltd. and has raised pigs extensively. The family consists of Brian, who has served in the Navy, is an elevator agent at Hines Creek and is married to Edna Currie of Halifax; Roger, who is in the implement business in Beaverlodge and is married to Glenda Schwemler of LaGlace; Colin, a welder with Proctor and Gamble and married to Karen Keller of Pouce Coupe; and Blaine, a heavy-duty mechanic now working in Perth, Australia.



Alsike seed crop. Jack Harcourt, Brian Harcourt and Norman Howarth.



Jack Harcourt and Norman Rochelleaux during February Chinook.



The Harcourts: Jim, Andrew, William, Bill and Jack, with a visitor.

The Jack Harcourt team with Cliff Biesel. First prize at the County Fair, 1952 and winner of the Bergman Trophy.





## THE HARCOURTS AT SUNRISE VALLEY — by Jack Harcourt

The Sunrise Valley school was built by volunteer labour in the summer of 1930. The first teacher was Miss Mary Cody-Johnson from Victoria. Her main pastime was playing bridge with our close neighbour Mrs. Lampert, where she boarded and Miss Nancy Dunn, our District Red Cross nurse.

Other forms of amusement were the Friday night dances, which were held at the local school houses of which there were five. We had a team and sleigh and almost every Friday night we would have a load of young people and our musical instruments and away we went. My brother Jim had a mandolin and Bill a mouth organ. I got so I could play a few waltzes and square dance tunes on my violin. Then there was someone who had a jew's-harp and knew how to get a tune out of it. Many times it was time for breakfast when we got home.

On her trips around the country with her team and cutter, Nurse Dunn had us boys go along with her to help with the team. On one trip we took a neighbour lady to the hospital in Dawson Creek. It was 40 below zero and the sleigh box was fixed up with a mattress and straw, a canvas over it and a coal oil lantern in it to help keep the patient warm. It took us seven hours to make the trip. Nurse Dunn always had a bottle of brandy with her and it came in handy that night.

Things were awfully tough in those Depression years. It was difficult to get enough money even to buy food. We had a team of roan horses and about that time the song "The Strawberry Roan" was quite popular. We decided to raffle off one of our roan horses. We made 100 tickets and sold them for 25 cents a piece. We made the draw at a dance at Progress. Our school teacher "Cody" won the horse, and as she did not need it, she gave it back to us. Thus, we still had transportation. One thing that helped her make the decision was that she and Bill were quite close friends.

We all went to a Bobby Burns night at Progress, a party arranged by Nurse Dunn. She made the haggis, even had a real sheep's stomach. I never did find out where the man that played the bagpipes came from. It was about 30 below zero that night, so he did not wear kilts!

Bill stayed there as long as "Cody" Johnson did. When her year's contract was finished, Bill's time on the homestead was up too. He did some breaking on his quarter and he had one team and two other neighbors also had a team a piece so by getting together they had a six horse outfit. I don't know where they got a plow but they put an outfit together and got the breaking done. "Cody" had a new 1930 Model A Coupe, with a rumble seat in the back, a real fancy car in those days. A few years later Bill sold his homestead to a neighbour.

## GEORGE HARRIS

George Harris was born near Yorkton, Saskatchewan. His father was James Henry Harris, of English descent and his mother, Elizabeth Bass, from Ontario.

George left home at age 17 and came to Edmonton. From there he drove a team of oxen for Archie Stone

and landed in Beaverlodge with \$17.00. The next year, on April 16, 1912, he filed on a homestead. He proved up without going into debt and in later years, when he was asked if he would do it again, he replied, "I think I would start with nothing. When a fellow doesn't borrow, he knows what he's got". He received his first team of horses as a gift from his father, had them shipped to Spirit River and went there to drive them home as he calculated that it would be cheaper than shipping to Grande Prairie.

George worked diligently, whether on his own farm or when employed by others. For years he chopped grain and sawed wood for the community.

He married Mabel Searles in 1937 and shortly afterwards moved to Langley, B.C. where he developed a chicken farm. He died there in 1971. His homestead is now the Eddie Brown farm, near Beaverlodge. George's sister Louise, was married to Homer Jaque.

## GEORGE HAUGER — by Josie Dahl

George Jensen Hauger was born on a farm near Oslo, Norway in 1884. The pair of skis he brought from Norway were in use by the family for 30 years. At the age of 21 he came to Duluth, Minnesota. Two years later he moved to Lethbridge and in 1908 took a homestead at Lomond. Ten years later he married Edith May Thompson of the Lomond district and continued farming there for another eight years. He was the first owner of a Model T Ford in the Lomond area. He was there in the years of drought and in 1927 the family decided to move to the Peace.

With two carloads of settler's effects they landed at Wembley and rented the Ole Larson land in Two Rivers. Later they moved to the Billy Salmon quarter and next to Don MacDonald's in the Huallen area.

Times were hard and there was a large family to support. In winter George made many trips in cold weather with coal from the Red Willow to Grande Prairie and other points. The children attended Two Rivers school and later the Klondike Trail school.

In 1940 they bought the Mac Miller farm near Beaverlodge. A common scene on the highway was George Hauger riding his bicycle to town. George Hauger was a staunch churchman and rarely missed being in his pew on Sunday.

He found it hard to express his beliefs in words or to talk to others about salvation but he found many ways to live his faith. His concern and interest in his neighbours and the example he and Mrs. Hauger set their family encouraged them to put on the family headstone: "They led the way!" He died in 1972 — a highly respected and much loved man.

Edith May Thompson, his wife was born in Dagenham, Essex, England in 1896. In 1907, after the passing of her father, William George Thompson she came with her mother and family to Canada. They settled in Oshawa, Ontario for a short time and later moved to Lethbridge. Her mother was the first woman to take out a homestead at Badger Lake near Brooks, in 1909. It was here that Edith met George Hauger and in 1918 they were married at Calgary. Mrs. Hauger is a very warm and loving person. She not only raised a family of nine but also grew large gardens to keep the



family going. She still remains on the home farm with one son, Marvin.

Sons Erling and Allan are veterans of the second world war serving in France, Italy and Holland. Robert also served in the Canadian Army but did not go overseas.

Erling is not married; Allan married Laura Dahl and has three daughters; Norman married Merle Brower and has two daughters. Robert married Bertha Lowe and has four daughters and two sons; Josephine married William Dahl and has four sons and two daughters; Marvin is single; Gladys married Bert Simmons of Dawson Creek and has three daughters and two sons; Irene married Frank McDonald of Calgary and has three daughters and one son. Harold married Joan Douglas and has two sons and one daughter.

#### **NORMAN DAVID HAUGER**

Norman Hauger was born July 24, 1922 at Lomond, Alberta, the third son of George and Edith Hauger. He moved with the family to the end of steel at Wembley, Alberta in the year 1927. The family first rented land of Ole Larson and Bill Salmon in the Two Rivers area. It was here he got the first years of his schooling. Later, when the family moved to the Don McDonald farm near Wembley, the children attended the Klondike Trail school. Here, Norman completed his school years.

When the family moved for the last time to the Mac Miller farm just south of Beaverlodge Norman stayed and helped his dad on the farm while his older brothers were off to war. About 1948 he purchased a quarter of land from Bob Steele along the river. At this time there were no gravelled roads and the land was being farmed with horses. The last 40 acres of this farm Norman broke with eight head of horses and a walking plow. He also made his own well drilling outfit and after drilling 60 feet secured a good flowing well. That same summer he drilled a well for Stanley McNeil and another for his dad. In later years Norman purchased more land close to the home place to make a more economical unit. This half section had previously been owned by Harry Dixon.

Norman is a great lover of horses and always keeps some around even after more modern equipment became available. He is a mixed farmer and tended a herd of cattle. He owned and operated a threshing machine and did custom threshing.

Norman was married in 1949 to Merle Brower of Stony Plain. Merle is a member of the office staff at the Beaverlodge hospital. She is an active member of the Royal Purple and supports other community and church activities.

They have two daughters, Terry Lea and Judy Lynn. Terry is married to Constable Tom Lomond of Edmonton and Judy is still attending school in Beaverlodge. The girls too are great lovers of horses. Judy is also very active in most sports.

Norman likes the quiet home life of the farm and is a good neighbour.

#### **ADELORD HOTTE AND FAMILY — By Gloria Lock** Adelord Hotte, usually referred to as Shorty came

to Beaverlodge in the fall of 1926 from Dunas, Saskatchewan and bought a half-section of land east of Beaverlodge. The buildings consisted of a log house and two small log buildings.

In the spring of 1927 he moved his wife Cloredia, his five children, and three carloads consisting of furniture, 12 head of horses, 18 head of cattle and enough machinery to farm a half-section.

Mrs. Hotte and children stayed in Wembley for a week while Adelord made a road from the base of the Research Station to his place. C. O. Pool, a kindly neighbour knew they were moving up and had a fire going in the log house and a lean-to on the house filled with wood.



The Hotte family.



The Shorty Hotte farm. Children — Laura, Buster, Laurette, Alfred, Edward and Rosie.



Shorty Hotte and Son Buster with a work team.



Mr. and Mrs. Hotte and children were French; Adelord was the only one who could speak even a small amount of English. They had Miss Mary Roberts who worked at the Research Station come on weekends to help with the English language. Then Miss Roberts and Miss Pauline Johnson helped Mrs. Hotte with the housework for several years.

Mrs. Hotte had a flock of white Leghorn chickens and raised hatching and eating eggs. She received 60¢ a dozen a setting. She bought registered white Leghorn roosters for \$25.00 a piece. It seemed that the neighbor boys liked her roosters, too, so come Halloween she would put the roosters in boxes and hide them in the house. The first summer they took their eggs to Wembley by horse and buggy, later they went by train. They also shipped cream to Valhalla Centre.

Mrs. Hotte raised a large garden, canned much of it as well as much of the wild fruit they picked. She always did the milking herself, and many other outside chores, as well as running the binder. She sewed for all the family. Mrs. Hotte, a talented stepdancer taught each one of her children. She performed many times in Beaverlodge such as at Talent Shows and during World War II at fund raising campaigns. Her own parents had not approved of dancing so she and her brother built a platform out in the cow pasture so that when they went for the cows they would practise their dancing. Many evenings at the Hotte house were spent in singing and dancing.

Shorty's barn was built in 1928. The logs were skidded north of LaGlace and were sawn into lumber by Olaf Hanson and Ollie Hegland. Con Clarke and Jack Roberts helped haul the lumber home. Austin Risbo and John Dolmer built the barn. Later on, a machine shed and a large chicken house were built.

In 1929, Adelord bought his first tractor, a "Hart-Parr" and an International separator. He did custom threshing around the community for many years.

Bob and Jim McLauchlan and Harold Pool did some brushing and breaking for the Hottes. On through the years, John and Adolph Hartman, Sid Roberts and Gus Mussack also worked for him.

In 1937 Shorty had a good crop of registered Garnet wheat and sold it for \$1.54 a bushel. That year he bought his first new car, a Dodge. He also raised registered Shorthorn cattle and Yorkshire hogs.

He was one, with many others, to voluntarily haul posts and lumber for the first curling rink and hospital which is now the Nurses' Residence.

In the winter months, both Mr. and Mrs. Hotte enjoyed curling. Adelord, Verne Johnson, Reg Little and Ralph Carrell won the Grand Aggregate in 1937.

Adelord was born at Cornwall, Ontario in 1896. Mrs. Hotte was born at Castleman, Ontario in 1898. They were married in 1917 and had six sons, five daughters, 38 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

Buster married Emma Heikel and is a retired Beaverlodge farmer who has moved to Drayton Valley. Edward married Sylvia Teigen and is a farmer and mechanic, farming in the Beaverlodge district including the original homeland. Victor married Phyllis Gardiner. They are operating a hunting lodge out of Haines Junction, N.W.T. Norious married Vera Heikel

and is employed by Swanston Lumber Company in Ft. St. John. Leo married Beryl Cook. He is a mechanic, too and farms at Hythe. Alfred was killed at Njimegan, Holland during World War II. Each year the family lays a wreath on November 11th in his memory. Laurette married Adrian LaFleur. They live at Grimshaw. Rosie married Melvin Wilsey and they presently are living on the Huallen farm. Gloria married Ken Lock. They raise pedigreed seed on their farm in the Two Rivers district. Coreen married Paul Evaskevich, a Grande Prairie real estate and insurance agent. Laura passed away on August 24, 1973.

Mr. and Mrs. Hotte retired from farming in 1962. Mrs. Hotte passed away on March 10, 1972. Mr. Hotte is presently in Hythe Pioneer Lodge.

On a Sunday there was usually a freezer full of home-made ice cream. Everyone always came home Christmas Eve to celebrate Réveillon, the midnight revelry; we'd sit up most of the night singing or maybe playing cards. As Gloria says, "They were good times!"

### THE ED HOTTES

I, Edward Hotte was born in Vandura, Saskatchewan in 1925. I came to Beaverlodge with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Adelord Hotte in 1927. I took my early schooling in Beaverlodge, at the old brick school. With so much work on the farm I had to stay home after I had finished my grade 8.

In 1943 I met and married Sylvia Teigen, whose parents came from Norway in 1913. They came west and homesteaded in the Valhalla district in 1915. Sylvia's mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Torval Teigen retired from farming and moved their farm house to Beaverlodge in 1966. Mr. Teigen passed away in 1968. Mrs. Teigen at the age of 81 still looks after her own home and yard.

With \$40.00 between us, Sylvia and I began our married life determined we would make a success of it. We got a job working for John Ehrensperger in the Two Rivers district. We both worked for him for \$100



Ed Hotte's house in 1964.



per month. Our eldest daughter Marna was born there in 1945.

We worked for John for three years. We saved enough money to buy our home quarter from Harold and Norah Pool. We also bought their old log house they had built near Bush Lake. We invited four neighbors with their tractors to help haul it to its present site. Our land was all heavy solid brush and we had to clear a place to put the house. I also bought their old log barn but I took it down piece by piece and rebuilt it on the home place. We had saved enough to have 25 acres of bulldozing done.

Our first house had no windows — we covered the openings with grey wool blankets. Sylvia and I cut wood and sold it in town. Whenever we sold a load, I would buy another window and down would come another blanket.

The first winter on our land I spent cutting wood. Then Sylvia and I would saw it up and haul sleigh loads to town. This kept us in funds until the next spring when I got a job in town working for Stan Davis. I had to ride horseback as we had no vehicle at that time. As well as working for Davis, I also trucked for Chris Sylvester.

In 1948 I started to work for Davis and Olsenberg in their garage. I did a bit of moonlighting on the side by vanning the school children from Mt. Saskatoon school to Beaverlodge. There were no roads fit for trucks or cars so I built a van for the sleigh and had a stove in it. With a good team and lots of wood the children were reasonably comfortable.

We bought our first truck in 1949 for \$350. — a used 1937 model. I built a van on this truck and vanned the children for three years. In those days we had to provide and service our own vehicles. I worked for Davis and Olsenberg, ran the school truck van in the summers and the sleigh van in the winters for six years. The old van degenerated to a play house for our children.

In 1951 I was on the street in Beaverlodge one day and ran into a fellow who had no place to go, no work and no money. He wanted a home! George Hegland, the man, came home with me and lived with us for 14 years. He is now married and lives in New Westminster.

We kept trying to build up the farm. And more and more I was becoming aware of the advantages of having a mechanic's license. I started taking a course in welding and heavy duty mechanics. In the winters I would have to go Calgary for a theory course. Grade XII mathematics was my bug-bear but I was lucky to have an instructor interested enough in my course to help me nights. It was a struggle but I finally got my license.

We had two more boys after this, Sheldon in 1953 and Arden in 1955. We started into cattle and as our boys got bigger we began milking cows. This kept the boys busy at home with chores and gave them some spending money. We gradually built up our herd to where we were using milking machines and a bigger separator. But once the boys began leaving home we had to give up the milking business.

I logged the Schaffter place and was able to get out

enough lumber to build a barn in 1963 and enough to start a new house in 1965.

With just a drawing on paper of what we wanted for a house — our neighbor Sam Werk was able to go ahead and construct the house we live in today. Of course we all pitched in to help — Sylvia and I, our boys and Sam's boys.

Our children are all married except Arden. Marna married Robert Gingles and they farm in the Halcourt district — and have three children. Maynard married Marlene Edgerton and they farm the Con Clarke place. They have a girl and a boy. Coleen, born in 1951 is married to Wayne Alde, lives in the Rio Grande district and they have two children. Sheldon married Vickie MacCallister, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ian MacCallister of the Wembley district. Vickie is a talented artist. They have no children.

#### SCOTTY IRVINE

Scotty Irvine was a bachelor living west of Beaverlodge and for a time Reg Leake lived with him. Neither were very practical and never could predict which way a tree might fall. Neighbors said that Scotty "couldn't even fix a clevis". Nevertheless he persisted in his farming operations, using a walking plough throughout.

The story is that when Scotty left here he went to work for a farmer in Saskatchewan. When the farmer could no longer pay him, he took over the farm and engaged the farmer to help him.

#### GEORGE JARVIS

George Jarvis bought the Ed Carlson land, east of town. He was a short, sprightly, well-spoken man who lived with his son, George, in a rather dilapidated log house without a floor. Their home life must have been a contrast to that lived in their native England. "Mr. Jarvis", as he was always called by his neighbors, had been a miller prior to his arrival in Canada. He had a little patter that he enjoyed relating, about this work, part of which is — "millions of bushels of grain have gone through these hands of mine — the wheat from Egypt was about the size of a coffee berry, only not quite so brown".

Both father and son were musical. Mr. Jarvis had a beautiful bass voice and could sing along with their record of "Asleep In the Deep", and could get right down to the lowest "beware". Their small collection of records was semi-classical — a real contrast to the surroundings. George, the son, had been a member of a boys' choir in the Anglican Church in England.

Mr. Jarvis always wore his navy blue suit coat, and often a tie when he called on neighbors. He never failed to have a supply of English peppermints loose in his pocket for treating the children. He was strongly against public expenditure because it would be resolved into taxes and "a homesteader always has to be careful".

They were good neighbors. George was the local area self-trained veterinarian, performing necessary minor surgical procedures and helping with the slaughter of hogs and cattle. He was a welcome help to many of the sheep men in the district who found shearing too difficult. He seldom made a nick with the hand shears.



Part of the establishment was two small dogs, considered to be very intelligent. They gathered the eggs and brought in the fire wood, could handle cattle well and, according to George, "thought a lot!". Also, there were usually cattle on hand, past the age of economy. On one occasion George drove 18 head of his cattle, each aged about 7 years, to market in Grande Prairie, taking several days to make the trip. Unfortunately the price was not satisfactory so he drove the cattle home. Later they were sold to a drover on condition that he be paid to drive them to Grande Prairie. The sale had one more condition, that each of the dogs be paid a man's wage for the drive. Could it be that the beef was sold to Japan as Kobe Beef? Another story which circulated locally was that these cattle were consigned to a circus or museum because of the extreme spread of their horns.

#### **THE JEFcoat FAMILY — by Willis Jefcoat**

My father, Ben Jefcoat and his brother-in-law, Fern Lucas, arrived in Grande Prairie, the end of steel, in December 1919 and filed on homesteads north of the old town of Beaverlodge. Mrs. Jefcoat and family arrived the next spring, April 13. The snow was still piled deep and the roads hazardous.

Dad brought 24 head of cows which cost \$80.00 a head and sufficient feed to winter them. However, the feeding period extended well into May and many farmers lost their stock from starvation. Some hay which was shipped in from Ontario sold for \$90.00 a ton and old straw roofs were in demand, even if they contained little nourishment. After feeding his cattle for two winters Dad sold them at public auction and received a note in payment. Three years later the note was still unpaid so father rounded up enough of the cattle to clear it.

The family walked the two and a half miles to school in Beaverlodge if the weather was good; if it was stormy they stayed home. Eight grades were taught in the one-room school. Victor Sharpe was the teacher. We milked cows and trapped to make a few dollars. Muskrats were caught in the fall through the ice. It was a very cold job setting the traps in the icy water. Dad and Claude would go into the mountains to the trap-line in early November and return in April. Some years the returns were good; other times they were disappointing. Claude was about 16 years old at the time. The last season Claude and I went out alone.

Dad received a break when he came within two beans of guessing the contents of a bean jar in Crummy Bros. store in Grande Prairie and won the prize — a new Ford car. He sold it forthwith as there were no suitable roads to our place and it was nearly impossible to find a place to buy gasoline.

In 1926 and 1927 we had a contract to haul the mail from Wembley to Rolla, a distance of 96 miles, two trips a week. The round trip took six days and we required 26 horses for the work. We ran into all kinds of weather, much of it bad.

In 1932 the family moved to Tupper, B.C., to a new homestead. Dad ran a sawmill there until the price of lumber dropped severely. Dad, Mom and four youngsters moved to Kelowna in 1934 and later to Enderby, in search of a warmer climate.

Dad served three years overseas with the Canadian Army in World War II. In 1946 he died as the result of war injuries. Mom lives in Vernon and is hale and hearty.

Claude left Beaverlodge in 1933, to work on a farm near Edgerton. He married Ester Challenger and developed a successful farm. They are now retired, to enjoy golf, curling and community service. Fern married Jim Gault, well known throughout the South Peace as a Road Engineer. Their three sons are well established. Fern and Jim retired in 1967 and their trailer may be seen anywhere from Yuma, Arizona to the Peace, where Jim must keep check on road developments.

Fay took her schooling in the School for the Deaf in Winnipeg and for many years was a qualified presser in a dry cleaning plant. May married Frank Morrison, a retired R.C.M.P. officer and later a log scaler for a larger lumber concern. Frank died in 1969. There are four children. The youngest lives with May on a small acreage near Winfield. It is planted to fruit trees and flowers.

Ray served in World War II in a Scottish regiment, and after an injury, transferred to the Forestry Division in Scotland where Dad served. On his return to Enderby, he started a dairy farm. He is married to Emma Scharam, a trained nurse. They are now retired but Emma still works part time in the Armstrong Hospital. Bernice married Ken Robb of Vernon and their family of two are still in school. She often thinks of Beaverlodge. Pauline, the youngest, was born in Beaverlodge. She is employed in the deaf school in Vancouver.

I, Willis, married Hazel Swanton of Edmonton in 1931. Discouraged by the early snow, August 10, 1935, we decided on a change of location. So in March 1936, we started off for the Okanagan Valley with four horses, a sleigh and a caboose. Crossing Lesser Slave Lake, we encountered an air hole and the horses went down but everything was salvaged in spite of a strong wind in 50 below weather. Sister May was with us and she grabbed a bundle from the bed, only to find that it was the pan of bread dough rather than the baby.

I farmed and logged in the North Okanagan until 1947 and then started a farm implement and garage business. In 1960 I was elected as Social Credit M.L.A. for the Shuswap area and served three terms. Presently I am in real estate and raise registered Quarter Horses as a hobby. We have seven children and all is well.

#### **ARNOLD H. JOHNSON — by Verne Johnson**

Arnold Johnson was born in White River, S.D. on July 6, 1885, the first son of O. H. "Rutabaga" and Mary Johnson. He had two older sisters, Mina, (Mrs. C. O. Pool) and Helen and was followed by five more sisters and one brother John.

His father was a sheep rancher in what was then a pioneer country and Arnold became involved in ranch work at a very tender age in a primitive and hazardous environment.

About 1895 his father sold the ranch and moved to Gordon, Nebraska. There he opened a general store in partnership with a man whose name is best forgotten.



In due course the partner absconded with most of the funds. It is an interesting characteristic of my grandfather that he made no effort to call the culprit to justice but just wrote it all off to experience.

Around 1900 the Oklahoma territory was opened for settlement and grandfather could not resist the call to another frontier. So the overland trek was made from Nebraska to Lawton, Oklahoma, where he acquired land. The family was soon engaged in growing cotton, corn and livestock. It was here that Arnold met and married Maude Reynolds. Their eldest son, Percy was born there in 1907. Soon grandfather seemed to tire of Oklahoma; the climate was too hot and the area had become too populated. He yearned for the wide open spaces.

In 1908 he decided to move to Canada and when grandfather made a decision it was for the whole family. So the spring of 1908 saw them all, Arnold, his wife and son, Mina and her husband Clarence Pool, (all except the second daughter Helen, who had married a Texan) living in Edmonton. Arnold made the move in a carload of settler's effects via Winnipeg.

Arnold worked various jobs in Edmonton while grandfather journeyed overland with the Rede Stone family in the summer of 1908 to explore the Peace River country. He eventually located at what is now Beaverlodge and returned to Edmonton in January 1909.

In 1908 a daughter Muriel was born to Arnold and Maude in Edmonton.

In early winter of 1909 the family set out on the long trek to Beaverlodge, the young wife and mother, Maude driving one of the teams pulling a "caboose."

The story of this trip has been told elsewhere in this book. Suffice it to say they arrived in Beaverlodge on April 19, 1909 to a wild, desolate uncharted pioneer area.

Arnold "squatted" on land, built a log house with a sod roof and began what was destined to be a lifetime of farming in the Peace.

In 1910 the land was surveyed by a crew under the late Walter McFarlane, and Arnold filed on his homestead, the SE of 10-72-10-W6, adjacent to the present town of Beaverlodge. Although the trip into the country was made with horses it was found that oxen could be used to better advantage under the rigorous conditions. Horses require grain when working but oxen will survive and work well on grass and hay. One further advantage is that when they grow too old to work they can be eaten.

So in 1911, on the annual trip to Edmonton for supplies, the horses were replaced with oxen. About this time the infamous Edson Trail was opened and Arnold, along with other neighbors made the long, rigorous, annual trip with oxen in mid-winter.

If conditions were good it could be done in six weeks. One can imagine the rejoicing in this country when the railroad finally arrived in Grande Prairie in 1916.

The arrival of this railroad made a vast change in the agricultural development. To no one's great sorrow oxen were replaced with horses, there was a

market for grain and livestock and prices were good. Arnold began a mixed farming enterprise in earnest.

I was born in Beaverlodge in 1910 and subsequently the family was increased to six children, with the arrival of Helen, Olive and Josephine.

Arnold was always active in the affairs of the community. He was on the local school board for years and I remember him being secretary of the farmers' organization, the U.F.A. for years on end.

He was one of the four dissidents who, disillusioned by drovers, put up two dollars apiece to charter the original Grande Prairie Marketing Association and he served on the board of directors for years. He became their buying agent in Beaverlodge in 1929, eventually being succeeded by Percy and myself until we gave it up in 1947 due to our increased involvement in farming.

Arnold was a great believer in all co-operative enterprises. He was a charter member in the Alberta Wheat Pool and helped organize the first co-op store in Beaverlodge.

By 1920 his wife Maude had become dispirited by the rigorous pioneer life and they eventually separated. Maude returned to Oklahoma with the three youngest children. Percy, Muriel and I remained with our father.

A few years later Muriel rejoined her mother and she still resides in Lawton, Oklahoma.

In those days the homes were always open to any itinerant who happened to need food or shelter. We had an unfortunate experience with one of our overnight guests. He left us with an infestation of mechanized dandruff. From then on when any stranger requested lodging, my father would bluntly ask him "Are you lousy?" Once bitten, twice shy!

My father Arnold continued to live on the farm until his death in 1969, 60 years in the Peace.

#### JOHN O. JOHNSON

I came over the long trail via Athabasca Landing, Grouard and Sturgeon Lake to Beaverlodge. My parents left Edmonton March 3, 1909 and arrived 37 days later, April 9.

I was born in the Bad Lands, Interior, South Dakota, U.S.A. As an infant we moved to Nebraska and then to Oklahoma before coming to Edmonton in July of 1908. I was one of the nine pupils which comprised the enrollment of the first public school, not only in Beaverlodge, the first in the Grande Prairie area. This was September 1, 1910 under the capable tutoring of Mrs. Chester Drake.

The school was held in A. G. Truax's scrip shack on the S.E. of section 2 in the N.E. corner, half a mile north of the old town. The nine students were Clarence Lossing, Rede Stone Jr., Albert, Winnifred and Clifton Miller, my three sisters, Ruth, Anna, Pauline and myself. I remember helping father haul logs for the new school which was built in the "Old Town" on the property now occupied by the Doug McFarlane residence.

My father, O. H. or Rutabaga Johnson died in October 1916. He took ill at a hay camp ten miles west of home, was taken to Grande Prairie by team, put on the train the next morning for Edmonton. He died a few

days later in the old Royal Alexandra Hospital. He was put on the train at the road crossing west of the hospital which was a real courtesy performed by the E.D. & B.C. We continued to live on the farm but discontinued the store which father had started in 1909. I stayed there until the spring of 1966 completing 57 years residence on Stoney Point.

The farm was sold to I. E. Gaudin. Part of this farm is now the new home for the South Peace Museum and some of its site was broken with a walking plough pulled by two oxen and one horse.

I helped with various community enterprises throughout the years, from the first log church in the "Old Town" to the turning of the first sod for the now modern United Church which is in service at this time.

In 1968, Lenabelle Moore and I were married. After living in Ardrossan, Alberta for a year we retired to live in Summerland, B.C.

The age of agricultural power should be recorded with the development of the Beaverlodge Valley. Horses were used first in the breaking of new land beginning in 1908 in a small way. In 1909, 16 teams of oxen arrived over the long trail. This was the beginning of the ox as a source of power as it could subsist without grain. They were used for 8 or 9 years. Grain supplies were plentiful by then and so the faithful ox went to market or were used for home consumption.

This ended the oxen era. Horses again were favored until the iron horse (tractors) showed up about 1918 and they increased in number up to 1930 when the depression started. During the depression, tractors were used mostly for belt power as there wasn't the cash around for fuel so the horses again came into their own as the most economical power.

By 1940 tractors had again taken over and today the faithful horse has disappeared on most farms.



Johnny Foster, Pauline Johnson, Mrs. Little, Laura Scott, Bert Little, Evelyn MacLennan, Johnny and Percy Johnson, Grandma Johnson seated. Easter, 1929.

#### THE OLIVER JOHNSON STORY — by John Johnson

During the summer of 1907 Oliver H. Johnson came to Canada from Lawton, Oklahoma. After looking over the Edmonton area and as far east as the Saskatchewan border he was still undecided as to where he would settle down to make his future home.

By chance, in Edmonton, he and two others bought an outfit, team, democrat, etc. and early in October started out for Athabasca Landing. By the time they reached Sawridge his partners refused to go any

further as they had had enough of the rough and muddy trail. But Oliver was undaunted and hadn't even thought of turning back. He sold them his share in the outfit and they returned to Edmonton.

The Rede Stone outfit had stopped there for the winter and was headed for Beaverlodge. They were weary from travelling all the way from the State of Washington. There was an abundance of slough hay to be had for their large drove of horses. Oliver stayed with Tom Lilac who ran a small stopping place there and made arrangements to go on with the Stones in the spring. When the days began to lengthen they pushed on. The only through trail at that time was via Peace River, Dunvegan and Spirit River and there was a poor trail over Saddle Mountain to Grande Prairie. At the east end of Bear Lake they stopped at Tom Sinclair's to rest up and to look over the country.

They then moved on to Beaverlodge and stopped at the small spruce bluff two miles north on the Beaverlodge River. The irony of it was that father and Rede Stone wanted that same spot. They were sporty enough to flip a coin for it. Rede won the toss so he stayed there to make his home until he retired from farming. Father wanted to make sure of having water on his place so he settled on the river at the mouth of Hay Creek, which years later was the Lloyd Pack farm.

The family had come to Edmonton in July, with the exception of Arnold who had come with a car of settler effects a bit earlier. Minnie and her husband, Clarence Pool arrived about mid-January, shortly after Oliver had returned from the Peace, so we were all there to travel north together.

The month of February was spent in the preparation of an outfit. With the help of son Arnold and son-in-law C. O. Pool, we accumulated six teams of horses, sleighs and material for the freight racks and the caboose which was to be the home on sleigh runners for the women and babies, which made a total of nine for the 6 x 16 foot caboose. It was one of the first compacts, equipped with a small cook-stove bolted down. Ruth, later married to Ralph Carrell, drove one of the outfits and Maude drove the caboose. Provisions were bought not only for the year but to stock a small store which was to become the first trading post west of Lake Saskatoon.

Personnel in the group were Father, Mother, sisters Ruth, Anna, Pauline and John, Arnold, his wife Maude, son Percy and infant daughter Muriel. A Dutchman by the name of Henry Roper agreed to drive one team. It turned out that he was not familiar with horses and this often called for patience but brought forth some humorous incidents as well.

On a nice, warm sunny day, March 3rd we left Edmonton arriving in Beaverlodge April 9th, 1909. We travelled via Athabasca Landing and up the river to the mouth of the Lesser Slave, then portaged where we went overland for about 16 miles to Sawridge, where father had stayed the winter before. We then went across the Lesser Slave Lake to Grouard, a distance of 75 miles. Crossing the Narrows, a distance of 16 miles was always a hard pull as it usually meant breaking trail through the drifting snow.



During that winter a trail had been opened up to Sturgeon Lake. We purchased hay and oats to carry us through but due to the unusually warm days and our heavy loads we didn't make good time. Some of the horses almost played out.

When we reached Sturgeon Lake there was a long row of curious native children standing near the Catholic school to greet us. Dozens of Indian dogs were darting about, usually sniffing for food. They were noted for tearing into loads at night. Bacon was their first choice but flour, sugar or even canned milk was acceptable. At dusk Father got out his shot gun and fired once into the air. Within minutes squaws and youngsters were running all over with moose hide thongs catching their dogs. Soon every dog was securely tied up for the night.

We had camped near the Hudson Bay store and from there we went down the hill to the ice, crossed the bay, and picked up the new winter trail heading towards the Simonette River. The days had been so warm that the steep pitches were bare and muddy. Shortage of feed and exhausted horses made it necessary to leave two loads each morning and travel only until noon each day and in the afternoon the men would go back and bring up the loads we'd left behind.

Reaching the Simonette was a struggle. Henry Roper was still limping with his sprained ankle and once where he was rolling his bed some distance from the rest, Father suggested that he come in closer. He replied, "Mr. Johnson, you get up early and you walk my leg around."

Travelling down the Simonette, Father walked ahead of the teams checking the ice with an axe. We often passed near open water at the rapids and then it became necessary to travel on the sand bars. There was some water on the ice on the Smoky River but the ice was safe. We travelled down river to the Bezanson homestead, a distance of two or three miles and camped. Henry Roberts, who had passed us on the trail had brought a load of hay for us from his farm at Lake Saskatoon but it had disappeared before our arrival so our poor horses had to pick what dead grass they could find about the yard. It was a hard half-days work to get the loads up the long steep hill at that point. Early the next morning we took off for Bear Creek, later Grande Prairie. Pool, with three horses that were unable to travel, remained behind. William Smith and sons Harry and Clyde gave us a real warm welcome and our horses had their first good feed for many days. We then moved on to Mead and Grant's, crossing Drystick Lake and Hermit Lake on the way. Next we crossed Lake Saskatoon to Leo Fergusons, who operated the Hudson Bay Post there.

The next day we went as far as Bert Meikle's, Father's travelling companion going out to Edmonton. His brother Harry was there too, both very shy bachelors and when two of the babies were put on their bed for a nap, the bachelors were concerned that they might be left behind.

We arrived April 9, 1908 at the log cabin Father had built the previous summer at the mouth of Hay Creek. There was a sharp contrast in the looks of our outfit on arrival compared to what it was when we left Edmonton when everything was new. However all arrived



Oliver Johnson, one of the first three settlers in the Beaverlodge Valley, in his turnip patch, which came to identify him as "Rutabaga" Johnson.



Mrs. Mary Johnson and family reunion on the occasion of her 72nd birthday.



Mrs. Mary Johnson and Mrs. Emma Cunningham at Stoney Point.





The first Christmas gathering in Beaverlodge. At the Rutabaga Johnson home, 1910.



Mrs. Mary Johnson.



Mr. and Mrs. John Dewar's log cabin with sod roof, 1914

safely and well. One of the first tasks on arrival was to uncover the cache of vegetables which Father had stored the fall before.

The little snow that was there on our arrival was mostly in the sheltered spots but near the end of the month we got close to a foot so father and Arnold took off for Dunvegan for some machinery an Indian had hauled to that point for us. It was locked up in a log shack because the Indian owed the Bay an account. Father wasn't to be stopped so he cut the chain and loaded up. About May 1st, Arnold walked across the river on the ice to the Dunvegan side, Two days later the ice moved out.

We moved to the springs on the hill which became our permanent home, on May 17, and some garden was planted the same day. The one-room shack was complete with sod roof and all. The room for the store joined on to this and was soon complete.

Land was broken on top of the hill for oats. Potatoes were dropped in every third furrow as the sod was turned over. The disking and brush-harrowing was done afterward.

The small store was in operation about the middle of June. This being the only place to trade west of Lake Saskatoon, we had a lot of Indian trade. The Indians preferred to sell furs for cash which was new to them for other stores wouldn't do this. Handling money was a new experience for them and they spent it all. When they came they would just sit until we gave them something to eat. We soon learned a few words of Cree, which pleased them. When Father was not home we children traded with them and bought all the furs other than black foxes which were very valuable at that time.

Mosquitoes were a plague that first year due partly to so much dead grass and sticks around as well as a very wet summer. Smudging was necessary for both man and beast. I can remember carrying a bucket of smoke through the house the last thing before going to bed.

About the middle of June Father and I rode horse back to Spirit River for the ten head of cows Father had purchased during the winter. Pierre Neas, an interesting individual, went with us. Putting everything on a pack-horse was new to me. Pierre's evening chore was preparing his 'kini-kinic' for the next day. He took the inner bark of the red willow, dried it in a frying pan to mix with his tobacco.

Father died in October, 1916. He had suffered for many years with a hernia which eventually caused his death. He was taken to Edmonton over the E.D. and B.C., a long rough trip for a sick man, and he died in the Royal Alexandra Hospital.

The small store was closed some three years later. I took over the operation of the farm with the help of mother and sisters Anna and Pauline. Mother passed away in 1942. She had led a full and busy life, raised a family of nine and had pioneered four times.

Mother, Mary Johnson, was born Anna Marie Brotan on July 14, 1859 in Norway. Her father was Ludvig Brotan and her mother, Anna Rustad. They resided at Endsvold, about 27 miles north of Oslo. This was the locale of the musical festival held in 1814 to commemorate the Union of Norway and Sweden. Grand-



father John Brotan, a professor of music, composed and conducted music for this important event. Mary's parents, with their six children sailed for America when she was eight years of age and on entering the United States in 1867 changed their name to Johnson. This was about the time of Abraham Lincoln's Presidency. It was a long journey, up the St. Lawrence River to the Great Lakes to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Water was carried in barrels and severely rationed. One of their possessions was a hand-made chest, built in 1771, for Mary's great-grandmother.

Oliver Johnson was also Norwegian but being very dark was sometimes called "Frenchy" and sometimes passed for a Swede. He was born August 16, 1856 in Capron County, Illinois.

There were nine in the family. Minnie married Clarence Pool. Helen Elizabeth married Mark Gault and lives at Tucumcari, New Mexico. Arnold married Maude Reynolds and continued to live in Beaverlodge until his death in 1969. Perhaps it is obvious that the neighbors of Rutabaga Johnson would refer to his oldest son as Parsnip Johnson. Emma married Bill Corigan and lives in Victoria. Elizabeth married Don Cranston and lives in Toronto. Ruth married Ralph Carrell and continues to live in Beaverlodge. Anna married Harry Carrell and lives at Grandview, Washington. John remained on the farm until 1965. He married Lenabelle Moore and resides at Summerland, B.C. Pauline married Kris Brekke. They moved to California where she died in 1969.

The Johnson farm, often called Stony Point, was sold to Jack Gaudin in 1965.

The Johnson home was a hospitality centre for the district. The first Methodist church service west of Lake Saskatoon was held there in 1909, under Rev. C. F. Hopkins. Christmas 1910 saw a gathering of about 40 persons, including Rev. Hopkins and a newcomer to Grande Prairie, I. V. Macklin. Mrs. Johnson became known as the "Mother of Bentum United Church" and on her death in 1942 the family presented a baptismal bowl to the church in her memory.

W. D. Albright was pleased to report Mrs. Johnson's early success with Early Dakota strawberries, currants, raspberries and generally a good garden. The Experimental Farm got its start with Early Dakota strawberries from her after several unsuccessful attempts on its own part to import stock.

Thus the story of true pioneers and good citizens, Oliver became a part of the Beaverlodge settlement at its very inception and after more than 60 years his name is still honored. Yet he was unpretentious and was a good neighbor. Perhaps this is best illustrated by the tale the family tell returning from their first week-long holiday at Lake Saskatoon Agricultural Society Annual Fair, attended by everyone free to travel, including several assorted Johnsons. Mrs. Johnson seemed a bit troubled and finally remarked, "They say I am Mrs. Rutabaga Johnson!"

"You ARE Mrs. Rutabaga Johnson" was the firm reply. The monstrous crop of rutabagas sown on his new breaking in 1908 from two pounds of seed bought at Lake Saskatoon had earned him this sobriquet.

It is noteworthy that the land occupied by the South

Peace Museum is part of the Johnson homestead and was broken in 1910 with two oxen and one horse.

#### PERCY AND VERNE JOHNSON — by Verne Johnson

A tree that never had to fight  
For sun and air, for sky and light  
But lived out in the open plain  
And always got its share of rain  
Never became a forest king  
But lived and died a scrubby thing.

Percy and I went to high school in Beaverlodge and helped our father on the farm. We milked up to a dozen cows and fed hogs. The chores had to be finished before school, including washing the cream separator and dishes. We were so hungry by noon that we began eating in Mrs. Halliday's restaurant. The meals were served family style, eat all you want, three for a dollar. I am afraid Mrs. Halliday didn't make much profit on two hungry teenagers. Here it was that I first became aware of her daughter, Ruth who was destined to be my wife.

After high school days Percy and I began our career in farming. We rented land, homesteaded bush land, were thwarted by the depression, but eventually built up a good farm and became reasonably prosperous.

We worked hard but also enjoyed life. We both loved to play baseball and spent several seasons with the old Beaverlodge Royals.

When Beaverlodge got a curling rink we became avid curlers. We curled together for years and won many prizes but our biggest success was representing the Peace River country in the Briar in Edmonton in 1954. Harold Jarvis and Vern Hill were with us there.

Percy married Jean Emerson, R.N. of Abernethy, Saskatchewan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Emerson. Jean grew up in the Qu'Appelle Valley in Saskatchewan. Her sister Mrs. Jack Cox lived in Beaverlodge and Jean came here to nurse in the local hospital. They have two children, Mary Jean and Stanley. Mary Jean is a graduate of the University of Alberta in Home Economics and is teaching. Stanley has graduated from high school and is working in Terrace, B.C. Jean's keen sense of humor is known to all her friends.

Percy was always very interested in public affairs. He and I both served several years on the Community Centre Board, various boards of the United Church and of course the Curling Rink.

Percy was the local Wheat Pool delegate for one term. In 1951 he was elected to the County Council and served on it until his death in 1961. He was chairman of the school committee for several years as well as working on various other boards. He was completely involved in this work and gave it his full attention. He was instrumental in building the present Elementary and High Schools in Beaverlodge.

After his death Jean and the children moved into the town of Beaverlodge and Jean returned to nursing in the local hospital.

During the early years of the depression I tried city life. I worked for the Department of Lands and Mines in Grande Prairie for two years but missed the farm. I

quit my job there in a real depression economy and returned to the farm and have never regretted it.

By 1942 Ruth Halliday had received her R.N. from the Vancouver General hospital and in 1943 Ruth and I were married. Ruth has taken an active part in the life of the community over the past 30 years, especially in the U.C.W. and the United Church. She was superintendent of the Sunday School for nine years and has also made many friends by her proficiency in nursing.

Ruth and I have one daughter and three sons: Howard, the eldest married Joan Every, a B.Sc. in nursing, of Toronto. He is a graduate engineer and is presently employed by Edmonton City Telephones as an administrative executive. Walter, a Veterinarian Doctor is practising in Fairview. Eleanor, Mrs. Michael Stringer, has a B.Sc. in Nursing and is currently doing Public Health Nursing at Prince George. Mike holds papers in welding and mechanics, recognized Canada-wide. Our youngest son, Lorne with a degree in agriculture married Elouise Scorgie who also has her B.Sc. in Nursing.

The Beaverlodge Community is proud of the public service record of the Johnson Brothers, their wives and families. Percy spent many years as a Councillor, with a fearless attitude of fair play and foresight. Jean and Ruth have seen extensive service in the field of nursing, while Verne has always been active in community affairs. If the rink or the church or almost any other institution needs funds, "Just call on Verne".

The Johnsons have many visitors, particularly relatives from the United States who must see first hand the Beaverlodge Valley. They readily accept Verne's tales of his prowess as a farmer and are particularly impressed with the physique of Verne's boys, which Verne claims is the result of each of them picking rocks as they were growing up. But the visitors do ask questions, such as, "How is it that your stones are all piled in the corner of the fence while your neighbours have them spread around?"

"Oh that," says Verne "Those rocks were delivered to me only yesterday and I have not had time to spread them out over the field."

"But why spread them out?"

"It's just a farming wrinkle of mine. I like to summer fallow so I sow my grain between the rocks. Next year I move the rocks and sow on the land they covered last year. It's really quite a simple way to farm and explains why I get such good crops."

#### **HENRY LUNAM**

Some say that Edinburgh is the heart of Scotland and that its policemen are stalwart. Henry Lunam's parents were born in Edinburgh and his father was a policeman there.

Eventually the Lunams migrated to a homestead near Wilkie, Saskatchewan. Henry bought land there, and then in 1937 shipped a carload of settlers' effects to his new farm northeast of Beaverlodge. With him came his bride, Wilda McKenzie, who was born near Saskatoon and whose parents were farming near Wilkie. They were also of Scottish ancestry, and had settled in Ontario when they first came to Canada.

There is a family of four. The eldest, Robert,

married Elaine Dolemo of Valhalla. Ronald married Mary Rose Tofer, a former X-ray technician at the Beaverlodge Hospital. They live at McKenzie, where he is a mechanic at the pulp mill. Verna is a teacher, married to Robert Wittow of Hinton, and Margaret is a hair dresser, married to Leslie Diepdale of Wembley and formerly of Elmworth.

Wilda remembers their days on the homestead where 13 bachelor friends made frequent mealtime visits, and where she served with eight others in Red Cross activities. In later years she helped in 4-H and U.C.W. work.

#### **ROBERT LUNAM**

Robert and Elaine Lunam live on the Albert Peterson place north of Beaverlodge. Robert is a mechanic, a graduate of the Calgary Technical School and has worked in garages in Valhalla and Beaverlodge. They have three children, Delmer, Kevin and Charlene, all in school. They have been active in providing leadership to the Scouts, Cubs and Brownies.

#### **MRS. EDITH MCKENZIE**

Neighbors will recall Mrs. Edith McKenzie, mother of Mrs. Henry Lunam, and who virtually "mothered" Johnny Johnson for several years and generally assisted in several other households.

She was born near Toronto and married William McKenzie of Kincardine, Ontario and originally from Glasgow, Scotland. William died in 1936.

Mrs. McKenzie calls Wilkie, Saskatchewan "home," but frequently visits the Lunam home in Beaverlodge.

#### **MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM McNEIL — by Doris Smith**

William Henry and Sarah Jane McNeil of Irish and English descent, respectively and family of four small children, Henry, Annie, Wesley and Stanley made their journey westward from Cobden, Ontario in 1903. They first settled in Alameda, Saskatchewan for 10 years but due to continuous drought and poor economy of the country they ventured to the Peace country in 1913 to take up farming on a quarter section along the Beaverlodge river.

Billy Johnson built a snug log house for the family, which was ready to live in when they arrived in 1914. They spent two weeks traveling with four teams and sleighs from the end of the railroad at Athabasca.

The next year Henry took Wesley and Annie back out to Athabasca so they could return to Saskatchewan where they both worked out to earn enough money to buy a herd of cattle for their dad.

It wasn't all sunshine in the Peace Country either. Money was scarce here too so Mrs. McNeil had to part with some fine Ontario furniture to put food on the table. The family kept busy raising horses, cattle and grain and Mr. McNeil had a wonderful garden by the river along with the help of his wife. Mrs. McNeil raised turkeys and took part in the fair at Saskatoon Lake, taking firsts for her bread and home-made cheese.

In 1916 Wesley had the pleasure of taking Rev. Charlie Hopkins, Mr. Gilroy, a student minister and two other passengers by team and democrat to Rolla



Landing, where they built a raft and travelled down the Peace River to Dunvegan. This was an adventure trip for all.

Stanley enjoyed playing his violin on the long winter evenings, entertaining his folks and the student ministers Mrs. McNeil boarded. Stan also belonged to the Cephass Tennyson string orchestra in Beaverlodge. He chose to live the carefree life of a bachelor.

Wesley returned to Saskatchewan to work in the Coronach area and joined the army in 1917. When it ended he married Blanche Elder and began farming. They had four children.

Annie married Harry Ching at Beaverlodge and returned to Coronach Saskatchewan to live. They had six children.

Henry married Mary Hartman and he helped raise two step-sons, Allid and Chester.

As Mr. and Mrs. McNeil were my grandparents I'd like to mention that grandma seemed a jolly person to me, always laughing her way through each day. Grandpa was a quiet spoken man. It intrigued me as a child to hear grandma tell, with a twinkle in her eye of getting behind the wheel of the old '28 Chevy and requesting Will, her husband and other passengers to ride in the back seat while she drove to Beaverlodge to do their Saturday shopping. I think Womens' Lib was "in" during the '30's.

Neighbours were really needed and appreciated in those early years. Rupert and Judd Perry and also the Bob Steeles were very close neighbours of the McNeil family.

Mr. McNeil passed away in 1944 after a lengthy illness and Mrs. McNeil in 1950. Henry passed away in 1966 after suffering from cancer for two or three years. Surviving are Annie Ching of Prince Albert and Stanley and Wes residing in the Pioneer Home at Hythe.



Mrs. McNeil, Stanley, Mr. McNeil 1913.



Henry McNeil, sister Annie Ching, Wes and Stanley McNeil, 1965.

### PERCY MERCEREAUX

Percy (Slim) Mercereaux came in with Bill Halstead and was known for his keen sense of humor. He filed east of Halstead on land later taken by William Vale. He enlisted in World War I and was killed in action.

Elmer Dahl recalls that he and Percy made a trip to Grouard late in 1915 for two loads of telephone wire. Elmer's load was strung past the hamlet and Percy's climbed the Johnson hill.

### TOM MURRAY

About June 1st, 1913 Mr. and Mrs. Tom Murray, together with their five children, ranging in age from 9 years to 2 years, departed by train from Nelson, headed for the Peace River country. Mrs. Murray's sister, Mrs. Jack Sutherland had gone with her husband to homestead at Lake Saskatoon several years previously and the glowing accounts of "free land" provided the attraction. Mr. and Mrs. Murray were natives of Ireland and had married in Nelson in the early 1890's. They travelled by train from Nelson to Athabasca, which was then "end of steel". From Athabasca to Sawridge they travelled by river boat, thence by wagon to Lesser Slave Lake. Another boat took them across the Lake to Grouard where they purchased a large tent and arranged for onward transportation by wagon to Lake Saskatoon. The wagon trail took them by way of Peace River, Waterhole, Spirit River and Buffalo Lakes to their destination. The trip from Nelson to Lake Saskatoon took three weeks. Needless to say it was no picnic for a mother with five children. Mosquitoes, floods, mud etc. were the order of the day. We had our first sample of "bannock" at Shaftsbury Mission after crossing the flooded Peace. It was rough fare and an indication of what we were to dine on for the next few years.

With the help of Jack Sutherland the Murrays were able to locate a fine homestead in Beaverlodge area and they moved there in July of 1913. Our immediate neighbours were Bob Steele, Ralph and dad Carrell, and the McNeil family with three grown boys and a daughter. As I remember they were all wonderfully good to us in the true pioneer spirit. The first summer we lived in our big tent and fought hordes of mosquitoes. We had a log house with sod roof ready to move into before winter. Tom Murray had been raised on an Irish farm but Peace River farming was different, particularly when one had neither horses, oxen or equipment. Dad went away to work on railroad



construction or whatever labor he could get to do. In the course of the next three years he managed to plow the required 30 acres and the homestead was "proved up" in 1916. In the summer of 1916 we moved into Grande Prairie where there was more opportunity to obtain work.

While on the homestead the three oldest children walked to school which was near Gaudin's store, Elias Smith's home and the Lossing place. Darcy Gaudin, Johnny and Pauline Johnson, the Millers, the Finns, the Pooles and numerous others were our school-mates. My outstanding memory of a wonderful teacher is of Fred Dixon — perhaps because he taught me how to tie flies for fishing in the Beaverlodge river which was full of fish in those days. I can still remember the smells of furs and kinnikinnick around the old Gaudin store! There was wildlife in abundance; the roof would be lined with prairie chickens every morning and the sloughs were occupied by beautiful mallard ducks. Also lots of beaver, muskrat, weasel etc. to be trapped. Once in a while we were given a chunk of moose meat and on occasion our mother would obtain part of a moosehide with which to make moccasins for the kids.

As I remember the main social life which we participated in was the 24th of May with the famous Beaverlodge baseball team. The closest doctor was in Grande Prairie, 30 miles by horse and buggy — so we did without. The same was true for dental treatment. Nevertheless the five children who arrived by wagon and the three additional who were born in Grande Prairie are all still alive and in good health. It was "hard-scrabble" living with no occasion for social graces but it was all tremendously interesting and a priceless experience to have been one of the pioneers of the Peace River Country. The outstanding recollection is that the quality of the people was superb!

The members of the Murray family are: Mrs. Bessie Crisfield, Victoria, B.C.; Mrs. Eva Lahey, Edmonton, Alberta, Desmond Murray, Chilliwack, B.C., Mrs. Helen Keating, Medicine Hat, Alberta; Mrs. Margaret Lucas, Victoria, B.C.; Dr. Frank Murray, Vancouver, B.C.; Mrs. Joyce Gains, Victoria, B.C.; James Murray, Mesa, Arizona.

Henry McNeil bought the farm about 1935 and eventually the house was moved to Beaverlodge. Arnold Christie and Cliff Stacey later farmed the place and it now is part of the Foster complex.

## NICK NASEDKIN STORY

Nick stood at our front door and gazed off over the hillside fresh in its new spring green with the fading light of evening casting contrasts of light and shade. "How that brings back memories! That's where I really become a golf enthusiast!" he exulted. "Harry Bruels used to float the greens — and we had them fenced to keep your cattle off of them — but it never worked, did it?"

And all of a sudden Nick and his wife Eleanor were reliving their early years in Beaverlodge. Nick was remembering the group who had had so much fun on that little nine-hole golf course. Nick said Ged Baldwin our Federal M.P., had initiated him into golf and he has been an avid fan ever since. But the "cow-pie"

hazards on Vic Flint's farm was one he didn't meet too often.

But this is Nick's story — not the story of the first golf club. Nick talked almost too fast to catch all he had to tell. He claims he's a mongrel — and we almost have to agree when we learn that he was born in China of Russian parentage, lived in Harbin, Manchuria when Manchuria was owned by the Russians and went to a Russian school. But also he was sent to classes at a Y.M.C.A. for six months to learn the English language. He learned a few simple phrases and words such as bread and milk and was surprised at how often he was asked to act as an interpreter because of this knowledge. At times he converses with the local Chinese in their language.

In 1924 the Nasedkins, along with 40 other Russian families came to Canada under the C.P.R. colonization plan — where groups were brought from foreign countries to settle some of the C.P.R.'s vast holdings. Their land was allotted 40 miles west of Ponoka at Homeglen where they arrived in October 1924. Nick was then 13 years of age and Jim was 7. The land they were given was poor farm land. Soddies were their first homes and poverty dogged their footsteps.

Nick was left in Ponoka and apprenticed for four years to a German butcher at \$2.00 a week and his room and board. The butcher's wife was a school teacher so Nick's language problem took a turn for the better. This good lady also had Nick studying math, spelling and history or whatever suited her. Considering that the butcher was pretty much of a slave driver these studies were quite a lot for a 13 year old boy to cope with. Nick got along quickly though — he said he had to learn English or keep quiet.

Each year his pay was increased by another dollar. The Russian tradition was that each one that was earning was to help those at home so he sent 90 per cent of his pay to his folks.

Nick remembers that his folks were able to buy a farm with a house and barn on it. But after two years they couldn't see that there was any way they could make a go of it there at Homeglen. The cry was "The good Peace River country, the land of milk and honey!" So the Nasedkins moved to Spirit River.

At the end of his four years apprenticeship Nick went to Spirit River to visit his folks with no obligation to go back to Ponoka. His father told him the local meat market butcher was looking for a butcher. Nick went to see him.

"I understand you are looking for a butcher."

"Yes, but not for any g— d— kid!"

"Sir! I'm a qualified butcher. I've apprenticed for four years."

"What? You're just a kid! Well, O.K.! Come on Thursday and we'll give you a try!"

Nick found the work there a snap after working for the German. He worked there for two years until W. J. Lampley — first Social Credit member of Parliament for Berwyn Constituency — came to ask Nick what he was earning and if he'd be interested in a change of job for more money. As this was what it was all about as far as Nick was concerned, he went to Berwyn for three months.



The next move, in 1930 was to Peace River where he was asked to manage a meat market with three men under him. And at this time Nick was only 19 years old. When Lampley went into politics he sold his meat market and Nick went to work for Peace River Meat Company at Peace River.

There he married Elda Searle in August 1932. Elda was a school teacher who had first taught at the Lawrence Ranch at Fort Vermilion and later at the Shaftesbury school near Berwyn. They lived in Peace River for three months until Nick was asked to manage a branch of Peace River Meat Company at McLennan. In May they took over the Beaverlodge branch for George Vogt who was moving to Grande Prairie. At this time Nick and Elda made their home over the shop in Beaverlodge. Nick remembers his first contact with the public was to buy a two-year-old steer from Percy Stephens. He offered him \$20 and Percy wanted \$25 so they agreed on \$22.50 if Percy would take out half of that in trade. Just recently Nick bought a similar steer for \$585.

Nick felt he and his wife were well received in the community — got along well with the young people and invited in by the older folks too. There was lots of community spirit in those days he said. There were Sunday dinners every week with bridge afterwards. He recalls the Alan Elliotts, Dr. and Mrs. McLean, the Sandy Andrews, A. G. Littles, the Ed. Lovens, the Bill Adams, Phyl Castles, the Bruels and the Nasedkins as the swinging crowd. When it was Nasedkins turn to have the gang for Sunday dinner they had oyster stew as their premises were too small to entertain lavishly. He recalls that Dr. McLean's always had spiced beef and the Bruels had homemade ice-cream.

In 1936 their son Jack was born in Grande Prairie as Beaverlodge had no facilities. Elda stayed with Mrs. Bert Bessent. Having no phone, Nick didn't hear of his son's arrival until he came to work one morning. When he first saw the baby he gasped, "My Gawd! What's wrong with that child." Nurse Anne Beath (Duffield) assured him all babies looked like that.

Jack Goynes built two houses where the liquor store now stands, Nick and Elda bought one and Herman and Monica King the other.

In 1938 Nick rented part of the old Evjen building across from the Town Hall and started up a shop of his own. Scotty Boyd managed the Peace River Meat Company shop. Dr. Goodhand was upstairs and Jean Carter had a dress shop in the other half of the main floor. In 1939 Elda became very ill and died leaving a 3½-year-old baby. Nick carried on a while longer with a housekeeper but just couldn't manage so he sold the business and took Jackie to his sister-in-law's in Trail, B.C. and joined the Air Force at Calgary. Nick was posted overseas the end of 1941 and was four years overseas in England, Belgium, France, Holland, Germany and Denmark. He was commissioned overseas and acted as an interpreter for Russian Air Force, R.A.F., and R.C.A.F. Nick claims he speaks seven languages, one being Cree.

When he came back from the War in 1946 he went to see his son, visited his folks at Fairview and returned to Beaverlodge to see what he could do about his house

and furnishings. He caught a ride to Sexsmith and phoned Jack Cox hoping he could get a ride to Beaverlodge. Jack said, "Stay right there! We'll come and get you!" When Jack arrived Sandy Andrews and Bill Harcourt were with him. Everyone was delighted to have Nick back but they wouldn't let him register at the hotel — "Oh, come on! We'll stop around over here first!" they said driving up at the door of the Legion Hall. Inside were 50 or more of Nick's old friends ready with sandwiches and refreshments to welcome him. "A great home coming!" said Nick. When he again suggested getting a room Harold Jarvis gruffly remarked, "We've gotta bed — you don't have to look for a place." And so Nick's one night stay extended into a month long affair and he took advantage of it to court Harold's cousin Eleanor Jarvis and to decide Beaverlodge was where he wanted to be. He bought the meat market from Lorne Quinn and opened for business June 1, 1946. In August brother Jim arrived to go into a partnership with Nick which in 1974 is still flourishing.

Nick bought the Jack Butler place through the V.L.A. Jim and Irene lived with him over there across the tracks. They also brought Nick's son back to live with them. In 1947 Eleanor Jarvis and Nick were married, Irene and Jim built overtown, and while Jack was growing up — going to University of Alberta to be a dentist and getting married, Nick and Eleanor were raising four more children, Jeannie, Robert, Margaret and Bill.

Eleanor and Harold Jarvis were double cousins — two sisters marrying two brothers. Both families came from Ontario to Bashaw, Alberta to farm homesteads their parents had filed on as early as 1905. They were considered real pioneers of the Bashaw area. Eleanor's father was a surveyor who had helped W. D. McFarlane survey the first 30 townships in the Pouce Coupe block. Eleanor came to Beaverlodge in 1945 to help Harold in the drug store. She said she came by train and swore if she ever left this country, it wouldn't be on that "damned" train. She landed here in a blizzard in December and has never been on a train since.

Shortly after their marriage the "Big Fire" that razed a whole block of the business section of Beaverlodge destroyed the Nasedkin shop too. It was the last building to go and with it went the last remaining memory of the meat business begun so many years previously by Elias Smith. Gone too were all the tools and equipment of the trade. But while the embers of the fire were still smoldering the Nasedkin brothers were making plans to rebuild. "In fact," they told D'Arcy Gaudin, "if we had some space we could go back into business next week." D'Arcy said, "You go and buy your equipment, we'll find space for you." Nick and Jim went to Edmonton to purchase equipment. Jim got home to find D'Arcy Gaudin had cleaned out his flour shed for them to use. Nick stayed to supervise the building of a portable cooler — that was being done section by section. They moved it in by truck and set it up in a granary behind Gaudin's store. They used this building for their sausage kitchen also. This and the flour shed was their "shop" while the new

modern block was going up. They moved in in November 1948 — before it was quite finished.

With the passing of the old building also went the plank sidewalks. Nick nostalgically remembers the kids who used to lose their pennies down the cracks; he kept a crow-bar handy in his store to pry up the plank and retrieve their lost coin.

After marrying Nick and raising a family, Eleanor said "I keep busy just doing my thing. We both like curling and golfing. We're both active in community affairs. Nick reminded her that she had held executive positions in the Ladies Auxiliary to the Legion and in the Royal Purple. She in turn reminded Nick of his work with the Elks with whom he had been District Deputy and the Alberta Provincial President in 1968. He has worked with the Chamber of Commerce, the Sports Association, been Zone Commander for the Legion and a keen supporter of the 4-H beef clubs.

Then they began to reminisce about the hockey Nick used to play, on the Senior Men's team with Harold Jarvis, Duncan Dunn, Alex Ozust, Jim Harcourt, Wally Clarke, Earl McDonald, Cameron and Bob Hume, Elmer Carter, Dr. Nixon and Don Little. Ed. Barrick was their coach and Art Bowtell their manager. When they wanted ice made they had to borrow every water tank available. They got water and tanks from the Johnson boys, Ryan's livery barn, Ben Dahl, Rex Ireland's livery barn, Stan Halliday and Ralph Carrell. Nick admits he wasn't very popular with the teachers when ice making time came around but he defended his actions by declaring "It gave the kids something to do on weekends." Geordie Bond used to take a day off, to help Nick slaughter for 50 cents a day and Miss Miller wasn't always pleased about that either.

Eleanor's hobby is her garden. She has recently become interested in ceramics and enjoys it very much. She used to play ball in her younger days at Bashaw where her team played in the Provincial finals. She has played at Beaverlodge under coach Art Dixon, at picnics and sports mostly she said, as league games weren't popular then.

The Nasedkins hope to retire soon and live right here. They might leave for the winter but they want time to fish and golf and curl while they are still able to do it.

#### **HAROLD PERRY**

When Harold Perry came north to help his uncle, Rupert Perry in 1955 it was not the first time he had visited the Peace River country. He had been north when a lad and again as a young man. During the later trip he, Bob Heller and Henry McNeil had driven a team and wagon to the Kinuseo Falls to bring out a tractor the Monkman Pass Association had taken in some time earlier. It was amusing to learn that these three had stopped at Stony Lake and caught some jack fish, which they took along in a cream can of cold water so they would have some good eating when they reached the falls. They changed the water at every new water supply but needless to say with the four days travel in the July sun the fish were pretty high when they reached the falls. Moreover they were chagrined to learn of the really lovely trout free for the

fishing at the falls. The boys even claimed the rabbits were so thick they stole their socks.

In 1956 Harold married Anne Laverty in a little country church in the Long Lake area near Senlac, Saskatchewan. Anne's parents were pioneers of the area, having homesteaded there from Michigan, U.S.A.

Anne received her education at Long Lake and the Nutana Collegiate at Saskatoon. Harold was educated at Chauvin and the Vermilion Agricultural School.

Shortly after the wedding Harold and Anne came to Beaverlodge where Harold went into partnership with his uncle Rupert. After Rupert's death in 1967 he took over the farm, carrying on a program of mixed farming.

They have 2 children, Beth, born in 1957 is a Grade XI student in the Beaverlodge High School with an eye to becoming a nurse. Bruce born in 1960 in Grade VIII at Hythe Junior High.

The family has been very active in 4-H. Anne has given excellent leadership, Beth and Bruce have participated and Harold has backed them all the way. Beth has excelled in public speaking so that she has participated in the provincial finals. Too she has had special 4-H trips such as to Ontario for two weeks in 1974.

The Perry family have been strong supporters of the annual County Fair in Grande Prairie with their field, garden and cooking exhibits. In 1973 they gained the highest number of points for their entries. The award was a silver tea service and tray presented by the Wagner Shows.

#### **BILLY PIERCE — by Verne Johnson**

Billy Pierce was born at Ailsa Crag, Ontario, near London. His father had emigrated from England in 1832. Bill married Phoebe Heath, formerly of England, and together they headed west. He was a tinsmith by trade and was a source of stove pipes for the new settlers.

In 1916 they returned to Ontario, where Bill resumed his trade. Later they sold their farm to Adelord Hotte.

There were nine children. Daisy, the eldest was born in Ontario and was a plump baby. One day when Mrs. Pierce had her in Gaudin's store a wag poked his finger at her and said, "Won't she make a lovely armful when she's sixteen." Her mother was strange to frontier life and did not take kindly to the remark! Daisy married Jack Bier of Toronto. The next, Nelson was born at Beaverlodge. He married Stella Stigman of Germany and they live at Mount Forest, Ontario. Darcy married Kathleen Stellard of London, England and currently lives at Burlington. Darcy has maintained an interest in the Peace and he and Kathleen have holidayed there several times. The younger members of the family are Edith, Wesley, Raymond, Evelyn, Genevieve and William, the youngest.

Yes, Phoebe was strange to frontier life. On their arrival the neighbors met to shivaree (charivari) them. They neglected to bring lunch and the Pierce cupboard was bare. Two runners were sent off to Gaudin's store for refreshments and the party was on.



The next day the Pierces picked up the tab, \$22.00, which was a lot of money in those days.



Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Pierce and Daisy, 1909.

### C. O. POOL

Clarence Orian Pool was born in New Holland, Ohio. While studying law at Ames, Ohio he came to know Booker T. Washington, an agricultural student who was to become a foremost food chemist and a noted emancipator of the negroes. At age 21 he joined up for service in the Spanish American war. Six months later he was discharged because of the effects of dysentery.

In 1907 he married a young school teacher, Miss Minnie Johnson whom he had met five years earlier at Ames. Now he was farming near Lawton, Oklahoma. In 1909, the young couple, now with one son, Ralph sold out and came to Edmonton and on to Beaverlodge with the Oliver Johnson family. The Beaverlodge Valley was then being surveyed but Clarence was able to get the land of his choice within the settlement. Then came the usual routine of clearing and breaking land and the annual mid-winter trip to Edmonton for supplies. One major loss, according to the local press of the time, was the death of a valuable cow, in 1913. It was considered valuable as it had recently consumed a quantity of bacon!

Both Minnie and Clarence Pool took a keen interest in public affairs. She was a life member of the Women's Missionary Society and for several years was superintendent of the Sunday School. Clarence helped to organize the local branch of the U.F.A. in 1910, was a director of the Valhalla Creamery and served on the Board of the Grande Prairie Municipal hospital and the Alberta Hospital Association. He died in 1954 and Minnie in 1967.

There were six children, Ralph the eldest, married Kate Clark and was lost in World War II in the sinking of an anti-submarine craft off Canada's east coast. Mina is a registered nurse and an ordained minister of the United Church. Clarence (Todd) is a civil engineer and lives in Saskatoon. He is married to Florence Lee. Lee married Opal Johnson who died tragically from flood conditions in 1964. He farms at Goodfare. Harold, married to Norah Clarke, is a veteran of World War II and since retiring as foreman at the Research Station is engaged in various community efforts. Yukola married Matthew Boyd. They now live in Edmonton.



C. O. Pool and family driving to church in a lumber wagon.



Yukola Pool mounted on one of her father's Yorkshire brood sows.

### THE HAROLD POOL FAMILY

I, Harold Pool, the second son of Clarence and Mina R. Pool was born at Redlow (later Beaverlodge) September 11, 1910 in a log house on SW 12-72-10-W6, one mile north of the old town. I was the first white boy born here. In September 1916 I started to the log school



on the hill in the old town where Margaret McNaught was the teacher. I continued through public and high school there until 1926, assisting with chores and farming at home.

In 1927 I broke 75 acres of land with six horses on the NW 2-72-10-W6 which is the main centre of the present town of Beaverlodge. I worked this land ready



Harold Pool and skunk, 1922.



Harold and Ralph Pool, 1930.

for crop the next year. Late in autumn the railway crew surveyed the proposed extension of the E.D. and B.C. from Wembley to Hythe and picked the quarter for the new town so that when homes were built in 1928 I had already worked a large part of this land ready for lawns and gardens. I walked over 500 miles behind a 16-inch breaking plow doing this work.

I homesteaded the N.W. 30-72-9-W6 in 1928 and as well as farming with father and my brothers, Ralph and Lee broke land and built a house on this property. I married Norah L. Clarke, daughter of H. W. Clarke on April 3, 1934. Norah was born in Edmonton January 13, 1913. She received her schooling in Ft. Saskatchewan, Grande Prairie and the McTavish Business College, Edmonton. We lived on the homestead. The following year Norah filed on NE 30-72-9-W6. We received the titles to the land in 1940 after seven lean but good years.

Our first child, Martha Ann was born two months premature, late in 1934 with grandmother Clarke in attendance, 20 minutes before Dr. Carlisle arrived. She improvised an incubator out of a wooden box, blankets and hot water bottles. It was to this that we owed her survival. Ann attended Mt. Saskatoon, Beaverlodge and Vermilion Agricultural College. She married Vernon Steinke of Lymburn. They have five children, Laverne married Joan Purvis of Hythe where they now reside. Laura Lea is Mrs. Russel Fry of Hythe. Colinette (Ann Louise), Duane David and Keven are still at home near Hythe.

David Lee was born in 1936 and lived only a week.

Patricia Renee Louise was born in 1937 and attended Mt. Saskatoon and Beaverlodge schools. She married Melvin Steinke, a cousin of Vernon. There are four children, Marty Ann, Gary Richard, Martin Colin and Karelyn Renee. They live in Beaverlodge.

Theodore Richard, born in 1940 was educated at Beaverlodge, the University of Alberta and N.A.I.T. He married Anne McKay of Gordonale. There are two children, Gayle Elizabeth and Richard Robert. They are in Kamloops, B.C.

Karen Mina, was born in 1946 was educated at Beaverlodge and the Fairview Agricultural College. She married Robert Steinke and they have a son, Scott Robert. They live in Wembley.

Hewitt Colin, born in 1954 was educated at Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie Regional College. He is still at home.

In June 1940 I joined the Armed Forces and served overseas from December 1940 to August 1945 with the First Artillery and later in Italy and Sicily instructing in mule packing for mountain warfare.

While I was away Norah kept house for her parents. Her mother died in 1941. In 1944 their house burned with nearly a total loss of contents, and this at a time of extreme shortages. Norah and her father moved to an adjoining farm. Mr. Clarke died of pneumonia in February 1945.

After my discharge I purchased my father's homestead and the NW 12-72-10-W6 adjoining and later sold our homesteads to Ed Hotte.

I farmed here until 1956 when I joined the staff of the Research Station. I resided there until 1967 when I



built a house in Beaverlodge. I retired in 1972 and have since run a service station in Hythe in partnership with Ann and Vernon Steinke. Earl Lossing bought the farm near Beaverlodge.

One event of interest I recall was potato planting in a late spring of May 1918 when Ralph and I were throwing pieces of dirt and hit one of the horses. The horses started to run. My father while trying to stop them was run over and trampled by one horse resulting in five broken ribs and internal injuries. The nearest doctor was at Lake Saskatoon. Ralph Carrell acted as a male nurse and father with a strong will to live pulled through. He was left crippled in body but not in spirit.

Norah and I have participated in various community enterprises, such as logging bees to secure lumber for the hospital and curling rink and assisting with camping facilities for the younger generation. It has always been rewarding and even yet we seem to get involved when the need arises.

#### **FRANK REYNOLDS — by Verne Johnson**

Frank James Reynolds came to Beaverlodge in 1913 and filed on the N.E. 3-72-10 for his homestead. Frank was a younger brother of Mrs. Arnold Johnson hence his way into this pioneer area was made comparatively easy, as the Johnson family had been here some four years and were reasonably well established.

Frank was young and gay, and enjoyed having a good time, and was not too serious about farming. When the first world war broke out in 1914, he enlisted in the 66th Battalion and was overseas for the duration. Frank was with Chip Kerr of Blueberry Mountain in the engagement when Chip received the Victoria Cross for capturing 62 prisoners and 250 yards of enemy trenches. Two men, possibly Frank Reynolds was one of them, helped Chip to escort the men behind the lines. Then Chip reported to the dressing station as he had had a finger blown off by a bomb during the exercise.

Frank returned to Beaverlodge in 1919, somewhat battered from war wounds but still in good health and still not too serious about farming. Frank was an active member of the Great War Veterans Association and participated in the building of the Victory Hall in the old town of Beaverlodge.

About this time he met a young lady, Alma Pack, whose father, Bill Pack, farmed in the North Beaverlodge area and they were married. They set up housekeeping on his farm but times were hard after the war and Frank was not satisfied with his lot. In 1923 with two young sons, they returned to Oklahoma. Frank and Alma have both passed away but their sons William and Clinton still live in Oklahoma.

#### **THE ROBERTS FAMILY**

H. A. Roberts, his three sons and a daughter came to Beaverlodge from Liverpool, England. Mr. Roberts was of Welsh descent.

The eldest son, Jack arrived in 1925. He worked in the district and took up a homestead five miles east of Beaverlodge. Harry (Barney) joined him in 1927. The following year their father and Sydney and Mary arrived.

Mr. Roberts passed away a few months after his arrival, following an accident. Mary took a position in the office at the Experimental Farm, where she worked for several years. Harry and Sydney worked at various jobs in the area until after Jack's death in 1930, then moved to his homestead on the north side of the mountain. Harry married Mabel Wilder and they now reside in Dawson Creek. Their four daughters are married. Joan married Allan Kerr and lives in Brooks. Phyllis married Rob Conner and lives in Dawson Creek as does Norma who is married to Raymond Haugland. Beth married Bert Van Duzee and lives in Grande Prairie. Sydney married Donald Fordyce in 1942 and they reside in Dawson Creek. They have a son living in Medicine Hat, Alberta and a daughter in Kamloops. Mary married I. C. Shank in 1942 and after Cj's illustrious career in the R.C.M.P., they are now retired and living on Salt Spring Island. Their home is indicative of their interests and hobbies. There is a music room for Mary, a den for Cj with room for his mementoes of his service years, his gardening book, his many slides, many of which are of native flowers. Both have a keen interest in their natural habitat and have for many years had excellent floral exhibits especially gladioli at exhibitions at larger centres.



Farewell picnic for Miss Mary Roberts at the Beaverlodge River. Experimental Farm staff and families, 1942.

#### **HOWARD RUSSELL**

My father, Vincent arrived in Wembley in 1926 and he filed on a quarter in the Elmworth district. He did carpenter work in Wembley also. I decided in the summer of 1927 to join him. I shipped my car, a Ford roadster, from Edmonton to McLennan and then drove from McLennan over the roads (some were corduroy) to Wembley. At Wembley I worked as a carpenter and filed on a quarter beside my father. In 1928 we bought a tractor and breaking plow and proceeded to brush and break on the homestead, not getting much done. In the spring of 1928, brother Woody arrived and filed on a homestead. In the fall of 1928 we bought a separator and threshed our first crop, which didn't amount to much. In 1929 we broke over 500 acres (custom work and our own) which was quite a lot for then. Then the depression hit. Everyone knows what happened during those years. We found it nearly impossible to pay debts on the machinery but we managed to survive. Wilfred and Marie arrived in 1930 and homesteaded in the Sylvester area.

Things began to pick up a little around 1934. In 1935 I married Rhoda Cook, the school teacher at Elmworth.

From this time on the homesteads began to look more like farms. With the help of my good neighbor Alex Thompson, we managed to start a barb-wire fence telephone. Before very long it was possible to contact most of the neighbors in the Elmworth district by phone. I farmed and threshed in the district for 21 years. Then because the oldest children had to go to high school and having to keep roads open in the winter we moved to Beaverlodge where I still have an interest in the farm which Doug farms now. My father passed away in 1956 and we all missed him because he was a big help in our family life and the farming operation. My wife and I raised a family of four girls and a boy and were a happy family. The farm had its ups and downs, but on the whole made us a good living. We were able to take some time off in the winters at the West Coast and we enjoyed the milder climate and had planned on retiring there. But our plans were changed as my wife passed away in 1969. This was very unexpected and as we had purchased a house on Vancouver Island I decided to turn the farm over to Doug. I have remarried and live on Vancouver Island. Since 1928 I have not missed a harvest in the Peace River country. If I were 20 again I would be right back there and do it all over again.

#### **SAM SARGENT — by Verne Johnson**

Sam Sargent came west with the Bull Outfit in 1909. Sam was a young lad, about 20 years old, directly from Toronto with no farming experience and little aptitude for pioneer life. However he managed to drive a team of oxen over the long trail from Edmonton to Beaverlodge and settled on the N.W. 6- and W½ 7-72-9 — now farmed by George Carty and Doug Russill. Sam made annual trips to Edmonton and later to Edson for supplies along with other settlers and improved his farm. Though he was not skilled in pioneer ways, his consistent good humor and pleasant character endeared him to the whole community. He had a good voice and at concerts could be counted on for a solo.

His father, James Sargent, came from Toronto in 1916 and homesteaded the S.W. 18-72-9. Sam returned to Toronto to city life in 1917, followed by his father a few years later.

#### **VIC SHARPE — by Verne Johnson**

William Victor Sharpe was born and raised in Ontario, where he became a school teacher. He enlisted and served overseas in World War I and returned to Canada in impaired health from his war experiences.

He arrived in Beaverlodge in 1919 and homesteaded the N.W. 8-72-9 and also acquired the S.W. 6-72-9 as a soldier grant. He made his home on the grant — the present home site of Jack Harcourt, where he was later joined by his mother.

Mr. Sharpe taught in the one-room log school of Beaverlodge for three years, 1920-22. He was an excellent teacher with a keen mind and a sharp wit. A strict disciplinarian, but always fair, he demanded and generally got top results from his students. Most of them will never forget him, some with mixed feelings.

At this time the Great War Veterans Hall was located in the corner of the school yard. A number of boys including myself discovered that we could gain entry through a trap door in the rear of the hall and filch chocolate bars from the lunch counter. After one daring exploit, Mr. Sharpe caught us with the incriminating evidence. We were in dire trouble. However, in his wisdom, he realized the temptation we were exposed to and let us off with a reprimand and a lecture on honesty that I am sure none of us ever forgot.

Mr. Sharpe sold out in 1924 and he and his mother moved to Wenatchee, Wash. The last I heard of him, about ten years ago, he was still there, growing apples.

Mr. Sharpe made a great contribution in teaching and molding the character and the youth of this area. He was truly a gentleman and a scholar.

#### **SOUTH PEACE CENTENNIAL MUSEUM**

The South Peace Centennial Museum had its beginning when Ted, Thelma and Gordon McLean, George Isberg and three or four more met at the McLean home and decided that it was time to save the heritage of the Pioneers of the Peace River country. It was Centennial year and what could be more fitting than a display of the machines, tools and household effects that carved homes out of the Peace River bush to make their farms of today.

Ted, with the help of Thelma and Gordon had collected over the years much that was to be the beginning of the museum. There were the Titan and cross-mounted Case tractors, Ted's pride and joy, the Case steamer that he had overhauled and painted and the water tank. There was the big threshing machine, the '26 coupe (Chev) and a collection of small hand tools, an Edison cylinder Gramophone as well as other Gramophones, old furniture and household goods, and a rifle collection. Gordon's contribution was his Graham Page car, that he had put in running order as well as rebuilding and reupholstering the inside. He had it polished till it shone.

In the spring of 1967 after the seven or eight had met, another meeting was called and 15 people from Hythe, Beaverlodge, Valhalla, La Glace and surrounding area met to form what was to be known as the South Peace Centennial Museum. The first president was George Isberg, secretary Connie Remple, vice-president Martin Fimrite. The executive was Ted McLean, Richard Dahl, Telmer Nappen and Allen Lowe.

A call went out that anyone wanting to display antiques or old machinery were welcome. The first money was raised by selling memberships to last a life time for \$5.00 a couple.

The first Pioneer Day was held in July 1967 with four vintage gas tractors, two steam engines, some more machinery including a sawmill and a shingle mill and household artifacts on display. Most if not all of the machines were working, including making of the shingles that were branded with the S.P.C.M. brand. The day was to take memories back into the past. The ladies did home baking, spinning, weaving and where else could you get home-made ice cream? It was a





A 12-36 Case steamer built 1913. Now at the South Peace Centennial Museum.

very encouraging venture with some 3000 people in attendance.

In 1969 a two-day show was planned but this presented too many problems. Now the show is held the third Sunday of July. The attendance has increased with people coming from all over to see the only "live museum" in Alberta. "Live" meaning where everything is in operation that day.

The membership has also increased to nearly 100; this museum is a member of the Alberta Museum Association.

The collection of pieces has also grown to 14 tractors, four traction steam engines, two stationary steam engines, sawmill, planer mill and grist mill which grinds whole wheat flour for sale. There are also three completed cars and trucks and three more being restored. The household antiques number about 600. Many more have been promised when the museum is located on the new site. The new site is 40 acres located between Hythe and Beaverlodge on Highway 2. The change was found necessary to make it more accessible to tourists. Ted and Thelma are the caretakers and live on the site. The original buildings were Maurice Lowe's house built in 1928 and donated to display antiques and Ralph Otterback's house donated by Robert Martin. More buildings must be erected to shelter everything. Trees have been planted and landscaping begun. The first Museum Day at the new site will be Sunday, July 21, 1974.

Exhibits of any antiques are welcomed. Some have come in for field day such as a steamer from Peace River and wood carvings from Dawson Creek.

The attendance last field day was about 4000. Schools bring classes out and individuals come throughout the year.

The membership ranges from Stettler to Ft. St. John up to Whitehorse and all over Alberta.

Present executive is president Gordon McLean, secretary Ida Gunderson, directors Edward and Maynard Hotte, Joe Lowe, Jr., Jake Jensen and Earl Sanderson. When the members are dressed in their pioneer clothes and the steamers' whistles blow again, you will know that another field day has begun.

#### ROBERT STEELE

Robert James Steele was born at Creemore, Ontario in 1872. He came to Spirit River with a survey party in 1907 with Bill Johnson. That fall they helped cut a new road from Spirit River to the Beaver Dams, north of Sexsmith. In 1909 they were on the crew which built the Dunvegan ferry. Meantime in 1908 Steele, Johnson and James Dodge came to Beaverlodge and there built a house for Dodge, to which he did not return.

The story goes that Bob Steele and Jim Bauman both wanted the same land. When Bob asserted his claim, Jim pulled off his coat and said, "Well, Bob! There's only one way to settle this." Bob filed on the river south of Beaverlodge, in 1914, where he farmed until he retired to Beaverlodge.

When the steel reached Prudens Crossing the road to Spirit River was well travelled. This prompted Bob and Bill Johnson to open a stopping place at Grizzly Bear, now Eaglesham. Art Funnell recalls one trip he

made to Edson, accompanied by Bob Steele, who was en route to visit a brother and three sisters in Ontario. They could not find shelter in the crowded bunkhouse in DeBolt. One of the occupants was another Beaverlodge settler, Ed Heller.

One of the incidents friends remember about Bob Steele was his "floating" the road with his homemade plank float and a sack of oats for added weight. He had four spanking horses to do the job and was hired by the municipality to keep the roads in condition.

Bob married Irene Walton. They had one son, Jack.

Bob served overseas for four years in World War I. He was a good neighbor and usually extremely amicable. The Steeles retired to Beaverlodge and Bob died suddenly in 1950.

### BEULAH AND FLOYD STICKNEY

Floyd came from New York State with a carload of horses to Saskatchewan. He was quite young. He worked on farms to learn farming, then came to Alberta and started on his own at Vegreville. Floyd met Beulah Trimble there. Beulah's grandparents are real oldtimers in the Edmonton district. Her mother's folks, the Fultons came west from Nova Scotia on one of the first trains to Calgary, from there to Edmonton by Red River carts in 1885. The Riel Rebellion was barely over so they lived in the old Fort as the Indians were still very uneasy but there was no further trouble. The men had to stay in the fort at nights but were allowed to take up land but not to work on it. Beulah's mother was eight years old and a brother nine. He was allowed to ride the plow as the Indians didn't bother children. He plowed where the University of Alberta stands now. Beulah's father's family, the Trimbles, came from Ontario in 1890 or 91 and his mother ran the first boarding house across the Saskatchewan river at Strathcona. Father Lacombe was the priest stationed at the old Fort.

Floyd farmed at Vegreville for several years. They married in 1923 and that fall went to Peace River. He worked for the Freeland family on a dairy farm for a winter and in the spring rented a quarter section at Berwyn from Dunc McCrea and shipped their settlers' effects up. Their first child Celia was born in 1924. Floyd knew people at Beaverlodge and wanted to see that part so had a sale in March and bought the Archie Stone quarter section near Beaverlodge and rented it to Stanley McNeil. Then they went out to Edmonton and rented a fully modern dairy farm with 25 to 40 cows, which were milked by hand. By 1929 they had acquired enough farm machinery and livestock to move onto the place at Beaverlodge in October. They sold their share of the wheat, luckily just before the collapse of prices in November. Going through the years of the depression is an old story.

Our second daughter was born in 1930, Sarah Anne. It's amusing to recall that our hospital account at the Grande Prairie Hospital was 50c a day and not too easy to come up with. Maureen Ruth was born in 1935. By 1946 prices had improved and we sold and moved to Mission, B.C. where we bought a small dairy farm and shipped milk to the I.V.M.P.A. until Floyd's death in 1962 at age 75.

Celia went to Normal school in Vancouver, is now

teaching remedial reading in the Yukon. She has four children, one girl and three boys. Sally graduated from U.B.C. and is presently treatment counsellor at an alcoholic clinic in the Yukon. Her husband is associate director of Social Work at Whitehorse for the Yukon Territory. They have one girl and two boys. Maureen is a registered nurse and took her training at U.B.C. but has recently left professional practice. She has two little boys, 8 and 4 years old. She is now managing a fishing and camping resort near Kamloops.

Beulah is living in a Pensioner's apartment in Ft. Langley, B.C.

Mrs. J. R. Moore painted a picture of the Beaverlodge home for us. It hangs in my living room. Now grandchildren are asking who will have it.

I have fond memories of many of our friends and neighbours at Beaverlodge — the Moores and Darcy Gaudins and many more.

### REDE AND ROBERT STONE

In the fall of 1907 Rede Stone and his cousin, Robert Stone, came in with wagons over the Swan Hills to Sawridge, where they left their equipment and proceeded on to Grande Prairie by horseback. The writings of A. M. Bezanson had convinced them that they must see the Peace as the site for their future operations. The following year they returned for their outfit and, accompanied by the Oliver Johnson party, settled in the Beaverlodge Valley.

Rede Stone was born near Fredricton, N.B., June 26, 1850. His father was English and his mother of Irish-Scotch extraction. In 1880 he went to Minneapolis and farmed there and above the Mississippi River for eight years. Then he went on to Montana and in 1900 to Washington Territory where he proved up a homestead at Chesaw. In 1907 he married the widow of a cousin, John Stone, brother of Robert Stone.

Rede was a rare type of pioneer. He was the soul of honor; generous and jovial in disposition. He was strong in his opinions yet open to criticism. He was everyone's friend and had no enemies. Fittingly, Beaverlodge chose him to drive the spike on November 24, 1928, in celebration of the railroad reaching his district.

For 35 years Rede suffered from eczema and latterly from asthma. For relief he made several trips to Soup Lake, Washington, and on one of these trips died, November 27, 1929. He was buried in the Odd Fellows cemetery at Orville, Washington.

One step-son, Ernie, died in Grande Prairie in the spring of 1908. The others, George, Percy and Rede Jr. filed on land in the Valley. George married Inez, daughter of Robert and for years was the district veterinarian. Rede Jr. (Slim) and Percy cut their first crop with a scythe and cradle and broke horses for other settlers. Rede Jr. enlisted in World War I and was killed overseas.

Robert Stone also settled along the river, on S.W. 35-71-10-W6. Close by his house was an old dugout once occupied by Klondikers who wintered in the Peace. His son, Archie, affected the cowboy attire of broad hat, spurs and chaps, sported a handle-bar mustache and played a mouth organ for the local dances.

Lest the reader be confused at this point, he should



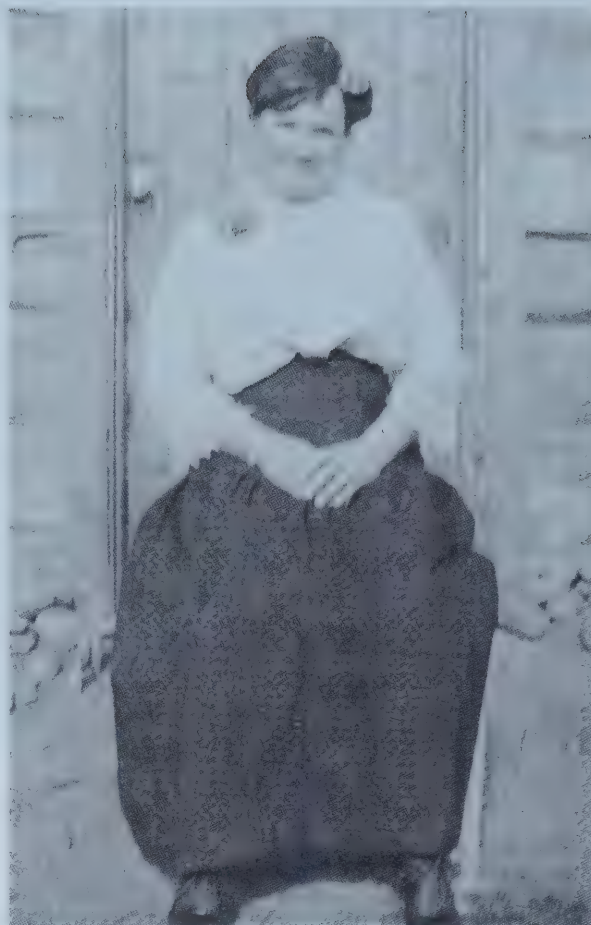
revert to basics; Robert Stone came in with horses, Rede with mules!



Beaverlodge pioneers George Stone, Rede Stone Sr., Rede Stone Jr., Mrs. Rede Stone and Percy Stone.



The Rede Stone home, Rede Stone, Mrs. Stone, Mrs. Mortwedt, Percy Stone, Mr. McBride, George Stone Jr. on horseback. 1910.



Inez Stone.



Rede and Mrs. Stone.





The Beaverlodge Industrial Company Ltd's threshing outfit at Rede Stone's. Purchased in 1914 and freighted in over the Edson Trail.



Percy Stone on his mule.



The Rede Stone House, note the sod roof.

### CORNY TOEWS

Meet Corny F. Toews, a bonded Class A guide and outfitter. For a small consideration, he will take you into big game country or give you a thrilling ride up the Wapiti River in a jet river boat. His interest in hunting stems from a love of the wild and experience gained from stalking moose and deer to feed a hungry family during the depression.

Corny was born in Tereck, Russia, near the Black Sea. His parents came from Holland to Germany, and from there to southern Russia and Tereck, where a group of about 100 Mennonite families established a colony. His father was a business man and with a brother began dealing in IHC machinery, besides running a book store and a lumber yard. Later the family moved to mid-Russia, Cossack Country, where Corny's father in company with two partners established a foundry and employed about 50 men. When the Revolution took place the employer-employee relationship was reversed but since the attitude of the owners of the foundry had been kindly, the workers did all they could to make life tolerable for them.

Corny's mother died in 1919 of typhoid fever. His father remarried and in 1924 the parents and six children migrated to Canada, with CPR assistance. They were taken in by a Mennonite Colony at Acme, Alberta, and bought part of the George Lane Ranch. Later the family moved to a farm near Humbolt, Saskatchewan and from there, in the fall of 1929, to the Adair Ranch north of Wembley, where an uncle was



settled. Corny took a homestead north of Saskatoon Mountain and in 1953 moved near Beaverlodge.

Corny is married to Anna Schmidt of Buffalo Lakes, but originally from Slavgorod, Siberia, about 300 miles southeast of Omsk, where another colony of Mennonites had settled. The district was about the same latitude as Edmonton but conditions were so favorable that grain crops never froze and watermelons and tomatoes flourished. However it was flat land and there was no protection from the winter blizzards. Like the Toews, the Schmidts came to Acme and from there to a Mennonite colony east of La Glace, and bought land at Buffalo Lakes.

Now farming is a sideline for the Toews. Anna works with Corny in the outfitting business. Their guests come from the United States and from West Germany.

The family is grown up. Eric is married to Phyllis Larson; Vern, an electrician, married Betty Cronovich of Clairmont; Laura married Floyd Hagen, a farmer near Worsley; Ben married Susan Wallach of Nelson and is with the R.C.M.P.; Phyllis married Jed Kociuphyk of Edmonton and they are currently missionaries in Chad, Africa; Gertrude (Trudy) received a 5-year Wheat Pool Bursary and graduated as a medical doctor in 1972.

The Toews suffered a major loss in 1964 when their house burned down and most of its contents were lost. Fortunately three of Trudy's six honor pins were saved. The silver flatware, a 25th Wedding Anniversary present of the family was retrieved, as was Corny's trusty 30-30 rifle, with the butt partly burned. Also retrieved was a family heirloom of 200 years, a wall clock which with careful treatment is fully restored.

The Toews are pleased to be in Canada and have a host of friends. Times were hard on the homestead but as Corny says, "the country was smaller then than it is now".

#### **ALICE (MORSE) WEBBER**

In October 1939 my parents loaded their belongings and six of us kids into our Ford truck and started for Beaverlodge. At Smith we ran into mud so dad and my brother Arland decided to come along as best they could while mother and the rest of us came by train. I met my first girl friend on the train, Margaret McDonald, now Mrs. Bob Hume.

Dad came to Beaverlodge because my brother Ron and his wife Margaret had previously moved here and thought there was a great opportunity for a blacksmith. He bought the blacksmith shop from Hans Brudwold, which did provide a comfortable living, combined with son Ron in partnership with his welding. In 1943 fire destroyed dad and Ron's shop. With the aid of friends they were able to rebuild.

After dad's passing in February 1945, Arland came home from World War II and went into partnership with Ron. Mother moved to Newburg, Oregon where she died in 1958.

In August, 1944, I married Jonas Webber and we moved to the farm three miles west of Beaverlodge, by the river.

The same year my brother's shop burned and this was a fire that Beaverlodge will long remember.

Jonas and I have six children: — Nadine married to Ron Romanoff, Janice married to Terry Howatt, Cecil married Laverne Cranstone of Fort St. John. Herbert is married to Brenda Hopaluk, Wainwright and Harvey and Brent are at home.

My sisters who came with us are now married. Verna married Ken Koebel of Hazelmere, now living in Langley. Lillian is married to Les Haller and lives at Merritt, B.C. Arland and wife, Joe Hodges, live in Prince George.

LeRoy and wife are living in Prince George, and Loyce married Joe Schobert and lives in Doe River.

#### **JONAS WEBBER**

Jonas Herbert Webber was born at Devil's Lake, North Dakota in 1899. His father was Fredrich G. Webber, born near Oil City, Pennsylvania, of German farming background. His mother was Gertrude Barr, also of German stock. Jonas' father had come West as the buffalo were disappearing, to homestead in North Dakota, near Minot. Then he moved to Devil's Lake, where he married. There were six boys and three girls in the family. In 1901 the family moved overland 100 miles to homestead south of Tagus, N.D., where they farmed and ranched but their main interest was ranching.

In 1909 they shipped two carloads of settlers' effects to Claresholm and settled on a small holding in the Porcupine Hills until March, 1914. Then they shipped to Edson. After loading as much as possible onto two wagons and with 13 head of horses, the elder Webbers with three girls and three boys started North financed by \$100 borrowed. They spent six weeks on the Edson Trail and located at Rat Lake, 33 miles northwest of Grande Prairie where a community was being established. Soon a meeting was held in the Webber house, 100 yards from the remains of Chief La Glace's house and a petition for a post office was signed. Fred Webber became the postmaster of La Glace in 1916. Jonas remembers Phyllis La Glace, now living near Horse Lake. Jonas and his mother hauled the mail from Spit Fire Lake P.O., now Buffalo Lakes. In his later years Fred lived at Saskatoon Island and was noted for his garden. Jonas moved his house to Beaverlodge next to the present Davis and Olsenberg car lot after his father's death in 1943 and made it a two story building.

Fred could have had good farm land closer to Grande Prairie but he wanted grazing land. Ole Omstead, at the west end of Bear Lake told him of Rat Lake where there were open flats 10 or 15 acres in extent with peavine so thick that a dog could not go through it. However he found that Lars Johnson had a hay permit on this land so Fred put up hay on shares at the east end of Bear Lake because he planned to bring in 18 head of cattle from southern Alberta, which he did, arriving in November. Jonas recalls hauling the hay week after week all winter and between times hauling building logs.

In the fall of 1919 there was a feed shortage in southern Alberta so Fred brought in two carloads of cattle from there for his son-in-law and thought they would have enough feed for the winter. But winter set in in October, so Jonas was forced to drive around Rat

Lake on the ice with sharp shod horses mowing whatever feed was available and he remembers that it was a cold job. Then he rode around Goodfare and Beaverlodge and was able to buy feed from Dan Chambers and Bob Steele. On April 1, 1920, they moved the cattle over Saskatoon Mountain, first to Steeles, then to Chambers, then to the forks of the Beaverlodge and Red Willow rivers, where they turned them loose on the dry banks of the rivers. Meanwhile Jonas had stayed at Steeles, breaking horses for the homesteaders to ride and drive.

Soon the neighbors began to complain so Mrs. Webber, Jonas, and his brother Harvey and a neighbor girl, Vera Abbs, started the first cattle round-up of the Peace River region. The stock was found as far away as Hinton Trail and the B.C. boundary and all except two head were recovered. Later, however, Steve Craig happened to locate these two, so the round-up was a complete success.

Jonas recalls that he first rode in a stampede at Northfield Hall in 1916 and pretty well grubbed the family until 1944, riding more than 1,000 horses in professional competition. His big event was to ride the famous Midnight on its owner's Jim McNab, home ranch at Granum. He didn't last but stayed aboard as long as anyone else ever did. Jonas rode in Calgary in 1924, and came away with prize money and a bandaged wrist.

As a boy Jonas had read about the great boxers of the day, including Bob Fitzsimmons and he longed to imitate Jack Dempsey. Thus, when hired help was needed on the farm, ex-pugilists were employed and Jonas used them as sparring partners in the evening, until, as Jonas puts it, "I could knock them down before they could floor me." Finally the big day came, when Harley Conrad matched Jonas with Don Butler, who claimed to be the Heavy Weight Champion of the Peace, on November 11, 1932 in Sexsmith. Butler went down three times and was counted out in the first round. Jonas stayed in the ring until the start of World War II, "Everyone else went to war and I couldn't fight alone." Today at age 73, Jonas claims to be champion over "all men his age and weight and about half the women".

Between times Jonas is an auctioneer and has been a harness maker. In 1937 he decided to quit working for a living and invested all his capital in a hotel in Sexsmith. The venture was not a success and in 1939 he found himself without funds or a job. It was a sad situation.

He is now in first class health but recently he was bed-ridden, hospitalized and on crutches, with arthritis. No one seemingly could help him and he had a business to look after and a family to support, so finally he threw away the pills, went on a diet and got well, with such means that he will reveal his secret, for a price, and reasons that many people need his aid.

In 1944 he married Alice Morse and in 1948 moved to his farm west of Beaverlodge. Since 1952 he has been engaged in long-haul trucking.

Although Jonas drives his truck most of the time, he still loves horses, and each fall cuts his crop with his horse-drawn binder. He is proud of the family

record of never losing an animal on their cattle drives and can remember every stick of corduroy on the Edson Trail.

There are several children. Nadine married Ron Romanoff and lives at Fox Creek. Janice married Terry Howatt, a meat cutter at Fort St. John, Cecil married Laverne Cranston, also of Fort St. John and is in T.V. repair. Herbert drives a truck out of Edmonton and is married to Brenda Hopaluk. Harvey and Brent are still at home.

When Jonas found himself stranded in 1939, he took the most likely move, to join Hilmer Johnson's party of six men, a team and a wagon and work on the Monkman Pass road. The Association could not pay wages but it did feed its crews, a very important consideration towards the end of the Depression. Hilmer had been out in 1938 so knew the road. Accordingly, the party camped at the Kinuseo River and for two months pushed the road towards the Falls, about 15 miles. They cut timber, grubbed stumps and built minor grades, all with one team of horses and collection of mattocks, picks and shovels. By harvest time the road was within about two miles of the Falls and most of the crew had to return to their farms. The unfinished section became known as "Tarzan's Highway" because it was littered with deadfall. The improved section would at least support light truck travel.

Jonas stayed on the job and became the road boss and cook. Besides he was Vice President of the Association! His crew of two carried on the job until one left and as the story goes, "and then there was one". Part way through harvest they broke camp and brought out the team, wagon and equipment. This was the last work done in the name of the Monkman Pass Association.

But the fever was still on. As Jonas worked on the road, he dreamed of a ranch and roadhouse which he would build in the Pass. Then came World War II and this dream, along with many others, vanished into thin air.







The Experimental Farm in winter.



Sawing lumber in 1925 on the Albert Anderson homestead.

# BUSH LAKE

The area generally referred to as Bush Lake lies north of Saskatoon Mountain and east of the Albright district. Some would have it include the Mountain Trail district south of Saskatoon Mountain while others regard Mountain Trail as a separate community.

The Bush Lake settlement comprises all the Mount Saskatoon school district and the west half of the Mountainside school district. Settlers on the east half of Mountainside district traded in Wembley.

The Mountainside school was the centre of much of the activities of Bernard Hamm, the famous naturalist. Mrs. Hamm taught the school and Bernard sought out the wildlife to study and preserve for posterity. It was in this district that he lost — by fire — the major portion of his outstanding collection of mounted birds. Working as a conservationist under the Provincial government he was able to replenish his collection. Part of his collection is in the Grande Prairie Museum and part in the Grande Prairie Regional College.

Mrs. Marjorie Clarke reminisces about the Mount Saskatoon School district. Some of the earliest settlers in the area, commonly referred to as the Bush Lake district, were the Caldwell, Schaffter, Allen and Sutherland families. By 1929 many people were moving in and there were school age children without the service of a teacher. An organizational meeting was held at George Kotteders where the first school board, consisting of Wally Clarke, August Bertram and M. F. Bain was elected. It was decided to build and the Mt. Saskatoon school district No. 4443 came into being. A site on the southeast corner of 29-73-9-W6th was carved out of the bush and a log building was erected, all by volunteer labour.

The school opened in June 1929 with Mrs. Olive Simmons, a sister of Mr. Lay, as its first teacher. She lived in Lay's yard with her four children and drove to and from school, a distance of five and a half miles each way. Her own children attended North Beaverlodge school.

The first pupils were Robert and Harold Bain, Viola and Leroy Bertram and Opal and Edward Johnson. George Kotteder did the janitor work for several years. The school was operated during the summer months, with holidays in the winter until the end of 1931, when it was changed to the normal year.

The building was heated by a barrel stove which burned 30-inch logs of wood which were piled in the yard once a year to dry for the next year's fuel. Pupils sitting next to the stove toasted on one side and the class was sometimes rotated so others could warm up.

Hot cocoa or soup was often prepared on this stove for lunch or perhaps potatoes roasted in the coals. Imagine a space in the walls big enough for a pack rat to enter when it decided to use the cupboard for a storage place for its dried toadstools, as happened one



Cart used by the Arthur Johnson children for school transportation.



The first Mt. Saskatoon school, Johnson, Bain and Bertram boys playing ball. 1931.



Pupils of Mt. Saskatoon in 1931. Robert Bain, Eddie Johnson, Leroy Bertram, Viola Bertram, Opal Johnson. Front row—Bernard Bertram, Donald Johnson, Harold and Dorothy Bain.





Pupils of the Mount Saskatoon school, 1944. Back: Curtis Johnson, Eleanor Schaffter, Ruth Lowe. Middle: Joe Lowe, Willy Schaffter, Libby Swensen. Front: Ken Swensen, Beulah Lowe, Joan Roberts, Agnes Lowe, Anne Pool, Ronnie Clarke.

time! This occurred in the fall before the banking to prepare for winter had been done.

As with most country schools, this one became the social centre of the district, with Friday night dances or card parties. There was always a Christmas concert put on by the pupils and an end of June school picnic, sometimes held near Bush Lake or on Mt. Saskatoon where the radar base is now situated. An occasional skating party at the lake brought the young people together. During the war years a small but active Red Cross group met at the various homes to knit, sew or quilt. Members of this group were Mrs. Morris Lowe, Mrs. Arthur Johnson, Daisy Anderson, Wilda Lunam, Norah Pool, Lil, Mabel and Marjorie Clarke. Mrs. Clarke, Senior, although not able to attend meetings knit many pairs of socks.

The log building was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1938 and classes were held in an improvised schoolroom in Paul Buhler's garage until the end of the term, as Mrs. Elma Buhler was then teacher. During the summer a frame building was built a half mile west of the first site. The new building served until 1949 when due to a teacher shortage, it was decided to bus the children to Beaverlodge. The building was then moved to Gimle school district and later sold and moved to Beaverlodge and renovated as a home.

The first "bus" driver was Ed Hotte. He hauled the children in a covered sleigh, warmed by a small wood-burning heater, in the winter and in summer a small covered truck was used. Finally the big yellow bus took over.

Children were served by this school over the years as new people moved into the district or younger children became of school age. Besides the original six were the Lowes, Martinsons, Schaffters, Roberts, Swensons, Lunams, R. and H. Pools, W. and L. Clarkes, the Werk and Boe families and the younger Bain, Bertram and Johnson children.

Then there were those without school children and the bachelors of the district who took part in the social life. Among these were Mrs. Mussack and sons Bill, Carl and Bob, the Hammerstad family, Con and Lil and Roderick Clarke, Karl Boe, Albert Peterson, Bert Watson, Al and Ole Von der Ohe, Everett Wedell, Bill Langford, Hans Waelti and Hans (John) Ehrensperger and Selmer (Sam) Nelsen.

In the early 1930's the annual salary for the teacher was about \$600. This was paid a few dollars at a time as the taxes dribbled in.

Marjorie also had memories of the Mountainside district which was directly east of the Mt. Saskatoon district and was opened in 1929-30. She recalls some of the early teachers as being Elma Elkins (now Mrs. Paul Buhler), Olive Throness (Mrs. Goertz of Sexsmith) and Mary Beard. Mary Beard stayed three years. The story is told of how Miss Beard, who came from Calgary, arrived when it had grown dark, was taken to a lonely little log teacherage and informed that she could get her water from a creek a certain distance "to the northwest." This must have been quite an experience for a young city girl, but perhaps it served her well when three years later she left for the mission field in Ecuador where she still serves. It was during her years at Mountain Side that the enrolment grew to 45 pupils at one time.

Other teachers were a Miss Dale, Henry Wiebe and Mrs. Bernard Hamm. There were also correspondence supervisors and Ruth Godwin of Calgary finished the term in 1949, the year the school was closed. By this time enrolment had dwindled and those who were left moved or travelled to other districts.

Some of the people who sent children to the school were the Ungers, Viens, Glowaski, Toews, Zyllas, Hamm, McMurrays and Schroeder families.

Road conditions did not encourage much travel between districts but at the end of June 1949 Mountain Side and Mt. Saskatoon held a joint picnic at Mountain Side. Pupils and parents from the Mt. Saskatoon area were loaded into a rubber tired wagon drawn by a tractor to make the picnic trip to Mountain Side. They held races, played ball and were served a hearty lunch and all thoroughly enjoyed their day.

#### MELFORD F. BAIN

Melford F. Bain, his wife Edith and three children, Robert, Harold and Dorothy, all of whom had the same birthday, exactly one year apart, came to the Peace River country about 1929, from Oak Lake, Manitoba. They settled in the Mt. Saskatoon school district where



Mr. Bain served as secretary on the school board. They boarded the teacher for at least two years.

Melford broke land for himself and neighbours with horses on a breaking plow.

The family moved to the North Beaverlodge school district to the Sutherland land near Hay Lake. Two little daughters, Alona and Arlene were born before they left in 1936 for White Rock, B.C.

A veteran of World War I, he served again when war broke out in 1939.

At the time of his death in March, 1974, at the age of 84 years they had 24 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. Mrs. Bain is still at White Rock. Of the family, Dorothy lives in Manitoba, and the rest at different points in B.C.



Home of Mr. and Mrs. M. F. Bain, first boarding house for teachers of the Mt. Saskatoon school.

### CARL AND TORBJORN BOE

Carl Boe was trained as a timber inspector in Norway but in 1926 he and younger brother, Torbjorn emigrated to Canada. They worked on a Saskatchewan farm that summer, in logging camps in British Columbia that winter. In 1927 Carl came to the Peace and a year later Torbjorn, Thorny to his neighbors, followed.

On the train to Grande Prairie Thorny found the time heavy on his hands so started to play his eight-string Hardanger violin, with Mother of Pearl inlays. The songs of Norway delighted his fellow passengers, also Rev. Ole Haugen, an occupant of the next car. Possibly this was Rev. Haugen's first trip into the country and if so he must have thought that Thorny's music augured well for his service in the new charge. Many times afterwards Thorny played his violin to the joy of the entire community.

Thorny married Renee Clarke. Their son, Eric has worked on seismograph crews through to the Arctic. Now he farms the home place with his wife Jeannette Nichol, and Eric also has time to work at the Air Base. They have two girls, Sharri and Michele and a boy, Robin. Carl did not marry and passed away in 1953.

Carl and Thorny were exceptionally good neighbors on the homestead. Now that Thorny and Renee are retired and living in Beaverlodge, Thorny just seems to know when the neighbors need some gardening done or snow shovelled. It is just a way of life for this cheerful Norwegian.



Thorny Boe hauling bundles to Clarke's threshing outfit.

### W. J. CALDWELL

The Caldwell's homesteaded here in 1911 and worked hard to carve out a farm. Mrs. Caldwell was slightly built but spent many days in the field picking roots. In 1924 they bought a registered Holstein cow in Red Deer and by R.P.O. methods, built up an outstanding herd. With 17 entries at fairs in Wembley and Grande Prairie, they took 14 firsts, 3 seconds, and 2 championships. Along with this enterprise, they grew registered grain and were considered good farmers. Bill died in 1940 shortly after they retired to town.

Bill married Alice Agnes Anderson, born in Strathroy, Ontario, when they lived in Petrolia, Ontario. From there they moved to Edmonton, to Clairmont and thence to Beaverlodge. Alice was an outstanding teacher for 40 years. She majored in French and remained fluent in it. One Edmonton business man remarked that "Mrs. Caldwell taught me to be honest and upright as no other person has ever done". In retirement, she was an earnest church worker and many friends were attracted to her because of her sterling character and alert mind. She died at age 86 in Calgary, shortly after leaving Beaverlodge.



Cutting a rank crop of Registered Victory Oats on the farm of Wm. J. Caldwell, 1929.



## GEORGE CARTY AND FAMILY

I, George Carty have been farming with my wife and family in the Beaverlodge district since 1936.

My father came from Ireland and my mother from Plymouth, England. They farmed at Punnichy, Saskatchewan where I was born in 1911. My mother opened and taught school at Crosswoods until 1912. The school inspector there was J. D. Motherwell, later to become Federal Minister of Agriculture. My father died in 1911, and later my mother, my sister and I moved to Senlac, Saskatchewan.

In 1934 I married Edith Ralph of Unity and we farmed for two years at Senlac — a farm and ranch area near the Alberta border. Edith's folks came from Norfolk and Suffolk counties in England. When they landed at Unity they were still 14 miles from their homestead, so they and their children loaded their effects, a steamer trunk and some tools onto a wheelbarrow and off they went. Edith and I were both born in Saskatchewan "soddies."

Farming in Saskatchewan in the '30's was a trial by ordeal for us. We had drought and drought and more drought. On the place where we were living the creek went dry — then the well went dry. We moved to another site and repeated the pattern. I helped Floyd Hugget load up and leave. Then I helped Henry Lunam pack up. I couldn't see any advantage to staying either. Edith was expecting again so I left her and Dorothy with her folks and I made the move to the Peace River country in December 1936.

I travelled in a box car loaded with settlers' effects including horses and machinery — and a box of mutton sandwiches. One week of swaying on the N.A.R. and I was glad to arrive in Beaverlodge December 2. My wife and two children were to arrive later by passenger train. It was 45 degrees below zero when I arrived but a well wisher, Lee Pool was handy to help me unload my horses, cow and calf and get them on the road. We arrived at C. O. Pools in time for a much appreciated steak supper.

At the same time that I was being taken to the Pool house, my wife Edith was driving through a raging blizzard to a hospital 12 miles from her parent's place to be delivered of our second baby, daughter Louise.

On New Year's Day my wife and family arrived. We moved our horses and equipment to the Hans Ehrensperger farm in the Two Rivers district and we worked for him for two years so we could purchase his homestead north of Saskatoon Mountain.

We farmed at Mt. Saskatoon for the next three years. Travelling to town the ten miles with steel wheeled wagon and a team of horses was a long tiring trip just to purchase groceries and a few meagre necessities. The last four and half miles wasn't much more than a bush trail, travelling over poplar corduroy over the many mud holes. We had good gardens but a can of cream brought very little and it was practically impossible to sell eggs or potatoes. Large Plymouth laying hens brought only 25c each.

Our closest neighbours were the Corney Toews, Henry Lunams, Bill Langford, Len Wilders, Sam Nelsen, Del Derossiers and Jack McMurrays. Several Sundays in the summer we would drive to the top of

the Saskatoon Mountain up the west end slope, all the neighbours gathering there for a picnic and a ball game. Coming down that hill in a steel wheeled wagon was another thing again — we had a baby in a carriage to cope with as well as a sprightly team that wanted to go home.

With roads so bad, being many miles from a school and farming prospects not too hopeful looking I decided to sell our equipment. I enlisted in the Canadian Army, 5th Armoured Division, in 1941 and my wife and children moved to town until my return from overseas in 1945. My wife saved enough out of my pay to buy an acre lot and the house which we later sold to C. O. Pool.

We then bought land through the V.L.A., built a house, drilled a well and bought and moved Ben Dahl's lively barn out from Beaverlodge.

Along with raising a family and farming, my wife and I spent a number of years working with the F.U.A. and F.W.U.A. — also helping to organize the Junior F.U.A. at Beaverlodge. Our daughters were also active in 4-H and Junior F.U.A. activities.

Of our family of girls, our eldest, Dorothy married Norman Watson of Dawson Creek. Louise married Ralph McNeil of Rio Grande, Marion married Eddie Brown of Beaverlodge, Patsy Cleland resides at Dawson Creek. Lillian married Robert Tappen of Beaverlodge. Cynthia and Gina are still with us on the farm east of Beaverlodge. We have 16 grandchildren and this year we celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary.

## CON AND LILLIAN CLARKE

I have just had the most interesting evening with Con and Lill Clarke — you know that quite helpful man at MacLeods who appears to be there for the sole purpose of serving you. Lill is that bubbly, vivacious gal who sometimes does shampoos in the Beauty Parlor. But they're both only killing time between holidays really — and living over the days they spent on their homestead and wishing they were back.

Con is the second eldest son of Henry and Anne Clarke. Con told me that he and his two brothers, Wally and Wogg (Charles) and H. W. V. (Alphabet) Clarke, a cousin batched for the first year that they homesteaded. In 1926 their sister Kate took pity on them and came to cook for them. They were just green city kids and Mr. Caldwell had told them the finer they worked their seed bed the better their crop would be, so they raked their first five acres of breaking by hand. They admit they didn't have much of a crop! And they were sure some surprised to see the Pool boys plowing down trees four and five feet tall and expecting to grow crop on that sort of rough land!

As a kid in Scouts, Con had a French Chef for a Scoutmaster and this Chef used his culinary talents to build fancy cakes and decorate them. Then the Scouts would raffle them to earn money. Con used to sit and watch him and mix his icings for him. It fascinated him so that when they were batching Con was the natural choice for a cook. He bought himself a cake decorating set and from then on, until only a few years ago he was the man to call on for fancy wedding cakes, anniversary and birthday cakes. His nephew Bill



Con Clarke with his pet owl on his head. Others are Elma Buhler, Lil Clarke, Kathleen and Ralph Pool with son Bradford, Lloyd Clarke and Paul Buhler in the car.



Con Clarke cutting wheat on John Taylor's quarter.

Clarke came to him a few years ago and asked to borrow his cake decorating equipment. "You can have it on one condition," Con told Bill, "that you never bring it back." This didn't mean that Con hadn't enjoyed his hobby — just that he was willing to let others have fun too. His culinary arts weren't limited to icing cakes though. That first year of batching he made bread three times a week — because he didn't have time to peel potatoes every day. He cooked a roast and thus fed his men on bread, roast, gravy and jam. The Clarke boys used to tease Tod and Lee Pool that there was money in the bottom of the jam pot so that they would clean it up properly. When Kate came Con gave up the cooking. Lill says she even has to leave his lunch ready when she's out at noon!

When father Clarke came north he brought the rest of his family to Grande Prairie where they lived until about 1930. Then they too moved to their homestead in the Mt. Saskatoon district. Nora, Rennie and Lloyd were still with them. In 1932 Con built the "Honey-moon Shack" in his father's yard and married Lillian Anderson, daughter of Bert and Elsie Anderson — and a cousin to Mrs. Walter Bond. "It was the 15th of June we were married the middle hour, of the middle day, of the middle week, of the middle month. We've been in the middle of things ever since!"

And it's true! Con reminisced about the first hockey team that he and Wally and Wogg had helped organize — a Senior men's team in Beaverlodge in 1928. Their first rink was in the old town just below Stacey's house — an out-door rink of course — and every time they

had the ice ready for hockey there'd come a Chinook and away went their rink. When they moved to the new town in 1931 their outdoor rink was on Jack Butler's across the track where Nick Nasedkin now lives. Later yet they constructed one across from Jim Castleman's blacksmith shop. The first members of their team were Dunc Hume in goal, Harold Pool, Ed Barrick, Buster Finn, George Tyrell and Wally, Con and Wogg Clarke. Wally was considered the best player in the country and with Ed Barrick and Moore Skelton their line was practically unbeatable. Buster Finn, brother of Mrs. Clarence Lossing was an outstanding defenseman. Later Colonel Lyle undertook to organize and finance the team — got them green and gold sweaters with beaver emblems then he left them high and dry. But they had fun playing against each other at practices and playing Wembley when they could. They also went to hockey tournaments in Grande Prairie. They thought they held their own very nicely!

When Lill came to Beaverlodge in February 1930 she got a job in the Beaverlodge post office and worked there for two years and then married Con. Since then the farm has been their first love. She has worked outside with Con picking roots and rocks and driving tractor. One day Con sent her out with the tractor and disc and warned her about a stump. So what was the first thing she did? You guessed it — straddled the stump with the tractor and hung up the disc. Another time he had the binder behind the tractor. Con had told her if she got stuck she'd have to get herself out — so she did. She put sheaves under the tractor to get out and then Con complained that she had put the profits under the wheels.

Con and Lill were also "in the middle" of the bush, and skunks, owls, bear and deer were frequent callers. One night Lill went tearing out to the barn where Con was milking to tell him that something was after the chickens. Con's loaded shot gun was handy so he stepped around the corner of the barn and came face to face with a bear. He let the bear have two loads — then stepped back into the barn and said, "Well, I got a bear!" "You're kidding!" says Lill, "No it's true!" Lill took off for the house so fast Con had to pick up her slippers for her.

For extra fun they chased skunks in their pyjamas. Or owls — one season owls got 26 of Clarke's turkeys but Con got 25 owls by using a flashlight and a shot gun. The owls came back every other night for their turkeys. Father Anderson even caught one alive while it was trying to steal a turkey out of the pen.

Con met Harold Pool on the road one day. Harold said, "I've just reported vandalism of my geese to the police. Nine of my geese have been shot!" The police arrived looking for empty shell cases — but Con found the culprits first. He examined the geese and found claw marks under each wing — proof that it was owls, not boys that had killed the geese.

Con and Harold Pool worked for the Poultry Pool for several years. One way the farmers' wives had to make a little extra money was to raise turkeys. The Poultry Pool would send in men from Edmonton, one who was an expert turkey killer and the other a grader. Con and Harold would receive the turkeys at a



given point on a given day — the killer would kill and rough pluck the birds — the lady owners would remove the pin feathers and at the end of the day Con and Harold would pack the turkeys ready for shipping in a heated box car. They had one-day receiving depots at Hythe, Beaverlodge, Halcourt and Wembley, two days at Grande Prairie and three days at Sexsmith. Their peak amount was seven carloads in one season.

Two years after Con and Lill were married they moved onto their own homestead and built that cute little place among the pines. They gradually were able to buy the Bert Watson quarter. Con's father left him 80 acres and John Taylor, a neighbour left Con a quarter. How lucky can you be? They carried on a mixed farming operation enjoying their livestock and poultry. Lill's specialty was her garden and her flowers.

The Clarkes, along with other Mt. Saskatoon residents built the school — known as the Bush Lake school. The school burned down one cold winter morning and when they rebuilt they screwed the desks to the floor so that they could no longer hold dances in the Bush Lake school.

Con and Lill say they were the last of the original homesteaders to sell out in their district — but they wish they were back on the land. Maybe Marlene and Maynard Hotte love it as much as they did but town life just isn't the same. They came from the city, were green homesteaders and now have gone back to the town to live; but for good healthy interesting living their mixed farming suited them the best.

Con and Lill have been on trips to Russia and Australia and are looking forward to more travelling and a good long life together for many, many years yet.

#### CHARLES RODERICK CLARKE

Charles Roderick Clarke, second youngest son of Henry and Annie Clarke, better known as Wogg, was born at Red Deer, took his public schooling at Fort Saskatchewan, his high school in Edmonton and by the spring of 1926, was ready for adventure. Along with two of his brothers Con and Wally he filed by proxy on a homestead in the Mt. Saskatoon area. According to his own version of his life the next 14 years must have been a blank but to hear Con tell it he had a lot of fun. When Con went out to thresh the first fall they were here, Wogg had to take over some of the housekeeping chores. He put the sheets to soak before Con left and when Con returned a month later the sheets were still soaking. His bread baking didn't turn out much better. He used up about 25 pounds of flour in one mixing but never got any bread out of it.

Nevertheless he had other attributes that compensated for his lack of culinary skills. He was the "pig" man of the three, deriving pleasure from the gains his pigs would make under his tender loving care. Wogg was also player of a coronet in a local orchestra with Esther Balderson on piano, Ted MacLean on drums and Kelly Pyke on the violin. They played around at the schools for a mere pittance — caring more for the fun of the evening than for any mercenary gains. All they ever expected was enough to pay their gas to the event.

Wogg was also one of the original members of the first Beaverlodge Band under John Murphy, the telegraph operator.

A fun time they recall was the picnics they used to have up on the end of Saskatoon Mountain where the Radar Base now stands. On a Sunday afternoon all the available horses would be rounded up — even 1100-1200 pound work horses being called upon — and away they'd go. The local school teacher was always included and the Pools, Jennie Bond, Paul Buhler, Verne Johnson and the Clarkes. The ride up the mountain, the view and the fun was always more than worth the effort.

Wogg was also one of the first hockey players the Beaverlodge district produced.

In 1940 he joined the Army in the first recruiting drive in the North and went overseas from Vancouver that same year. He returned six years later a married man. However, his wife Clara Jane Chambers and daughter Rose of London, England didn't come to Beaverlodge until three months later when he had a house built to accommodate them.

In 1948 they all returned to London thinking to make their home there but Clara and Rose preferred Canada so they were back in Edmonton in a year's time.

Wogg had decided against farming and sold his land to Robert Werk. At this time he joined the services of the University of Alberta looking after the sports equipment, issuing out such as was needed and ordering in new supplies. He remained with his job until his retirement in August 1973 and still resides in Edmonton where they intend to stay unless winters get them down. And they still think of Beaverlodge as home.

#### H. W. CLARKE

Henry Wallace Clarke was born in Cheshire, England in 1870. As a young man he took a deep interest in music and graduated from the University of Manchester, also from the London University in music and other studies. Later he attended a university in Germany.

He married Sarah Ann Atkinson, born in 1877 in Shipley near Leeds, England. Four daughters — Kathleen, Mona (who died at age two years), Josephine and Renee were born before the Clarkes moved to Canada in 1903, Mr. Clarke preceding the family by several months.

They settled in Red Deer, then in the Northwest Territories where Mr. Clarke managed a large lumber yard. The twins, Wallace and Zeta (the latter died in infancy) and sons Colin and Roderick, otherwise known as Wogg, were born in Red Deer.

In 1911 Mr. Clarke joined the Dominion Government Timber Department. After moving to Edmonton he worked in the Dominion Land Office. There, another daughter Norah, was born.

He became timber inspector and auditor for the four western provinces, which necessitated much travelling. The family moved to Fort Saskatchewan. Here, Lloyd, the last of the family was born.

A move was made back to Edmonton when the older children were ready for high school. For a short time Mr. Clarke was land agent at Grande Prairie until the office was closed, when the handling of the





H. W. Clarke and Sid Truby on a timber inspection trip, 1912.

resources was taken over by the provinces. He was chief advisor in Edmonton for the Dominion government during the transition period. Then he retired to his farm in 1931.

He had made his first visit to the Peace River country in 1912 in connection with his work and liked what he saw. Wallace, Colin and Roderick filed on homesteads in 1926, in what was to become the Mt. Saskatoon school district and Mr. Clarke bought an adjoining quarter section, the S.E. 19-72-9-W6. A house was built on Roderick's quarter on a beautiful site among the spruce trees. It was here the family lived, the numbers gradually decreasing as each son or daughter was married and moved to his own home.

The Clarkes enjoyed their retirement with all their family nearby, except daughter Josephine who had married Ben Pollard of Fort Saskatchewan. They had 22 grandchildren. Both were avid readers and the family enjoyed many hours of fine music when Mr. Clarke would play the piano or when all would join in a family sing-song.

Mr. Clarke served on the Beaverlodge hospital board and the Mt. Saskatoon school board and took an active interest in community and national affairs.

Mrs. Clarke passed away in 1941 and is buried in the Beaverlodge cemetery. In 1944, a few days before Christmas, the family home with all its contents was completely destroyed by fire. Mr. Clarke died in February of 1945.

#### LLOYD CLARKE FAMILY

David Lloyd was the youngest son of Henry and An-



H. W. Clarke with some of his grandchildren.

nie Clarke, born in 1915 at Fort Saskatchewan. At the age of seven his parents moved him to Edmonton for six years. Then they moved on to Grande Prairie for three years and finally settled down at Beaverlodge in 1930. Being then only 15 years of age Lloyd wasn't old enough to have a homestead but was allowed to file by proxy. Thus he acquired property by Bush Lake. He



went to Beaverlodge High School from his father's farm. His school friend from Grande Prairie, Winston Grant lived with the Clarkes for some time and went to school with Lloyd. One boy would ride the horse to school the other would ski.

When asked what boys did with their time when not in school, memories were stirred. Con and Lill remembered having to vacate their little house every so often so that Lloyd and his gang could practise their orchestra. Lloyd played a banjo, Stan Halliday played a mandolin — but what Lee Pool, Elmer Carter and Cameron Hume played has been forgotten. Lloyd was also involved with hockey as his older brothers had been but would much rather dance.

In June of 1938 Lloyd married another dancing enthusiast — Mabel Teigan, second daughter of Torval and Clare Teigan of the Hythe district. Sweet and shy, Mabel and Lloyd made a striking couple for she was as fair as he was dark. Con and Lill having vacated the "Honeymoon Shack" it was now time for Mabel and Lloyd to use it. Stanley Robert Lloyd was born there in 1940, took his schooling in Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie and is now in the Forestry Department as Fire Control Officer for Northern Alberta. Lois Elaine was born in 1943.

There is a little story about Lloyd — it seems he was wanting someone to dig a toilet hole for him (not wanting to do it himself) so he made a bargain with his wife's young brother. Lloyd would give him his banjo if brother-in-law (Lloyd too) would dig the hole. Young Teigan claimed it was really something — finding a banjo at the bottom of the toilet hole!

In 1950 Lloyd finally made up his mind that he wasn't cut out to be a farmer. Though his wife helped him with the field work, and Con and Lill were helpful pals of theirs still he just didn't want that life — he wasn't getting ahead he felt. Lill remembers that she and Mabel used to wave to each other across the fence as they worked their separate fields — and would have fun together skating on Bush Lake. Many the time they dashed home to make some quick corn or pea fritters for supper because they'd skated too long to make a big meal.

Mrs. Clarke Sr., the boys mother, was still alive in those days and Lill and Mabel used to take month about looking after her and seeing that she had proper meals too, a shared concern as it were.

The Lloyd Clarkes moved to Grande Prairie in 1950 where Lloyd found employment with Beaver Lumber, a position he retained until they again decided to move — this time to Kelowna in 1963.

But soon after their move to Grande Prairie a third child, Lynne Maureen was born. During their life in Grande Prairie their eldest children graduated from high school. Lloyd and Mabel joined a square dance club and enjoyed this happy form of recreation.

In 1965 the Clarkes moved to Kelowna. Mabel had the care of one of her grandsons while Lois Elaine continued the teaching career for which she had trained at the U. of A. Lynne Maureen graduated in Kelowna, B.C. and is now married to Gerry Gardener of Edmonton. But they live in Kelowna too.

With the family well on their own Mabel has

become very proficient in ceramics. She and Lloyd have maintained their enthusiasm for square dancing which is their chief interest, and have quite a few pins — dancing at a good many places. Lloyd is now in the office of the Beaver Lumber in Kelowna and as a side line likes "puttering" and making things with his carpentering tools.

### WALLY CLARKE

Wallace Clarke was born in Red Deer in 1904. He received his schooling in Fort Saskatchewan and Edmonton. He was always interested in sports and participated in football, baseball and hockey. He was active in the Boy Scout movement and became a King Scout.

He came to the Peace River country and homesteaded on S.W. 30-72-9-W6 in 1926. He farmed with brothers Colin and Roderick, and later Lloyd and their father, as a company known as Clarke Bros.

He was a member of the first Mt. Saskatoon school board and served almost continuously until the school closed in favour of bussing and then as representative on the Beaverlodge Board until 1960. He played hockey on teams from both Beaverlodge and Wembley. He and Colin were instrumental in organizing a hockey team in Beaverlodge.

In 1934 he married Marjorie McLaughlin who was teaching in the district. Marjorie was born in Lloyd-



Clarke Brothers' threshing outfit. Wally on the separator, Ole Van der Ohe on the rack. 1931.



Reward wheat on breaking on the farm of Wallace Clarke, 1931.



minster, Alberta in 1907 and raised on a farm at McLaughlin, Alberta a district named for her family who had come from Ontario, among its earliest settlers in 1906. She attended the district "little red schoolhouse", Lloydminster high school and Camrose normal school and just before coming to the Peace River country in the spring of 1931, took the two-in-one course at the Vermilion school of agriculture.



Hauling water from a spring on Clarke Brothers' farm. Brad Pool, Ron and Tom Clarke on the white horse. Anne and Patsy Pool and cousin Sally Pool on the black.



Wally Clarke digging out the woodpile, with help from sons Tom and Ron.



There were happy, busy years on the farm with practically all supplies produced right at home. Everyone pulled his weight. In the summer when the men tilled the soil and cared for livestock, the women did gardening, berry picking, baking, churning, canning, sewing.

In the winter, the men hauled huge piles of wood and cut and packed ice for summer use. There were fun times too, with neighbourly visits, picnics, card parties and dances.

The family consisted of three sons. Ronald, the athlete of the family was born in 1935. After graduating from the Beaverlodge high school he apprenticed as a plumber and gas fitter. He married Sheila Davis of Wembley in 1962. They have three children, Donna-Marie, Melanie and Lorne. They own a home in Wembley and Ron works as a forklift operator at the plywood plant in Grande Prairie.

Thomas arrived in 1937. After his graduation from the Beaverlodge high school he joined the Armed Forces. He completed his training at The Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, receiving his lieutenant's commission. He also graduated from the University of Alberta with a B.Sc. in Civil Engineering, and attended the Royal Military College of Science in Shrivenham, England. In 1960 he married Margaret Drake of Kingston, Ontario. They have two sons, Stephen and Ian. Now Major Tom Clarke, he is living with his family in Ottawa where he is serving on the Directorate of Armaments Engineering.

William was born in 1947. He attended school in Beaverlodge and Wembley. He was an active Army Cadet. He was married in 1971 to Wannetta Diepdael and they have two small sons, Leonard and Meryl. They have their home in Wembley and Bill works for John Neil, Esso agent, in Grande Prairie.

After Wally's father's death, the family company was dissolved. Wally continued to farm until 1960 when he moved with his family to Beaverlodge to take over the caretaker position at the Elementary school, a job he carried out for 11 years. Marjorie does very beautiful handcrafts. You'll see her exquisite work at her home, at friends or at the Arts and Crafts Exhibitions.

Wally and Marjorie are enjoying their retirement years in Beaverlodge.

## "DEL" DEROSSIERS

Adelord Derossiers lived near Tawatinaw before settling north of Saskatoon Mountain. His parents died when he was young and from then on life was a struggle for him. At times he was a lumberjack, otherwise he was a hunter and outfitter. His wife died in Edmonton about the time he came to Beaverlodge. There were two daughters and a son, Maurice, cared for by Del's sister in Edmonton. Maurice spent some time on the homestead but returned to Edmonton. Finally Del went back to Edmonton and died of cancer.

Neighbors recall that Del was a good neighbor and cheerfully fed everyone who came along. He weighed about 150 pounds and on several occasions carried a pack of 150 pounds the 11 miles from Beaverlodge to his farm. His hospitality extended to celebrating his



birthday six times a year and the story goes that one neighbor woman resting in his house while Del and her husband made some repairs at the barn thought that she smelled bread burning in the oven. The oven was found to be empty but in due time she discovered the source of the odor, a barrel of mash behind the stove.

### HANS EHRENSPERGER

Hans Ehrensperger, better known as "John" came from Switzerland in 1929 and bought a farm on Saskatoon Mountain. While there he bought himself a saw-mill and Albert Anderson ran it for him. People from far and near came for lumber and John's home was a free boarding house.

John not only came to Canada with a degree in agriculture but also with some money behind him. He was able to get his land cleared and breaking done and hence grow grain. Rumor has it that John was "an easy mark" for all who "borrowed" grain from him on the promise to pay it back!

In the spring of 1934, John bought the Ole Larson land. He had plenty of lumber from his mountain land and was able to hire a carpenter for 25 cents per hour so he put up a very good barn. A lot of men got a "grub stake" out of John in the thirties by clearing and grubbing his land by hand. All the Two Rivers and Lower Beaverlodge neighbours hauled their fire wood off of his place for a couple of winters. No charge! "Glad to get rid of it!" was John's comment.

John didn't really like to batch and at various times hired women as housekeepers. One winter he even had his sister from Switzerland staying with him. It was a long winter for her as she spoke very little English so communication with neighbours was difficult. Neighbours recall one of John's housekeepers arrived with a small flock of sheep as a sideline and bad weather struck at lambing time — the new arrivals took over the bath tub.

John built a new house around 1945 and his farming seemed to prosper. It was a sad day for the neighbourhood when a neighbour called at John's and found that he had died alone.

### KATHLEEN CLARKE GLOVER

I am Kathleen (Clarke) Glover, born in Manchester, England in 1898. I came to Canada with my father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Clarke. We left for Canada in 1903 and settled first in Red Deer, Alberta. In 1908 we moved to Edmonton where I went to school. Six years later we moved to Fort Saskatchewan where later I began work for the telephone company. In 1922 we moved back to Edmonton and I took up dress making.

In 1928 we went to Beaverlodge and stayed on the homestead with my brothers. I cooked for my brothers Wally, Con and Wogg the second year they were on the homestead. One morning when I was making them some pancakes, Wogg was teasing me and I said, "If you don't cut it out I'll pour the whole works over your head!" He got it!

I was very fond of horses. My sister, Rennie Boe and I bought saddle horses of our own and were among those who enjoyed riding to the top of the mountain for a Sunday outing.

I obtained work in the Gaudin store. In 1932 I married Ralph Pool. We went farming on his land. Next year our son Bradford was born and five years later our daughter Sally arrived.

Ralph went threshing and he came home with sore eyes, which turned out to be trachoma. Ralph saw Dr. Levy, the eye specialist. For two years I treated his eyes twice a week with blue stone.

In 1941 we sold out and went to Edmonton. Ralph went to work for Air Craft Repairs. In 1943, Dr. Levy sent him to the hospital where he had his eyes treated. In no time his eyes were back to normal.

In 1944 Ralph joined the Navy and was made Sh PWT and went to sea at once. He was transferred to the Esquimalt and in 1945 his ship was torpedoed. Ralph went down with the ship.

We stayed in Edmonton, Brad finished school, took one year University and then went into electronics. He is living in Edmonton, is married and has two children. He is a technician working at airports.

Sally finished school and took a business course. Then she went to work in the Education Department and became the Minister's secretary. She married Roy Ferris and they have two children. They live in Vernon, B.C. and are both working in their own rental business.

I worked part time at the University. Then in 1963 I married William Glover. After he retired we moved to Kelowna, B.C. where we now live.

I have visited Beaverlodge each year since 1945 to visit my brothers.

The hi-lite of my golden years was a trip last February to Hawaii, Fiji, Australia and New Zealand. On the trip were Colin Clarke, my brother and his wife Lil and several friends of Beaverlodge.

### THE HAMMERSTAD STORY

Peter Hammerstad was born in 1872 in the beautiful province of Toten, Norway. Miss Guldborg Agnes Kraby, who was destined to become Peter's wife was also born in the Toten province in 1874. They were married in 1894. Two sons, Nels and Alf and one daughter Ruth were born to them.

When Peter was 52 and his wife 50, the children persuaded them to try farming in a new land. Well, in 1924 Peter and Nels decided to go to Canada, look around for land and if they liked it come back or send for the others. Mother, Alf, and Ruth were to come later on, if they liked it there.

In 1924 Peter and Nels sailed away from Norway's shores never to see them again. They docked at Montreal and took the train to Edmonton. Nels and a friend, Leif, drove an old Model T into the Peace country to look for land. When the roads were dry it only took two days to make the drive but when there had been an excessive amount of rain woe betide the traveller on the highway! Nels and Leif were lucky, for they made it in only two days. Nels returned to the Peace again, this time to obtain land. On the same train were fellow-travellers from Norway, Mr. and Mrs. William Braaten and son Sigurd. When they alighted from the train in Sexsmith a real-estate agent named Halvor Gaara greeted them. When he heard

they were interested in purchasing land in the Valhalla district he offered to help them find suitable land.

Peter felt that someone should be looking after the farm, so he left Nels in Edmonton and after the usual slow, tedious journey by the E.D. and B.C. railroad, came to his farm. How he must have longed for Norway at times. Peter Hammerstad liked people, was sociable and helpful to those who needed help. When Bob Weir, a neighbour was ill one summer, Peter walked over there night and morning to do Bob's chores. In 1927 Nels filed on S.E. 13-73-9 and filed by proxy for brother Alf on S.W. 18-73-9. Nels and Alf later sold their quarters to Martin Erickson. Unfortunately, the quarter that Peter filed on was not proved up for he was ignorant of the government laws concerning homesteads.

That fall, in 1927, Mrs. Hammerstad, Alf and Ruth



Alf, Ruth, father and Nels Hammerstad, 1935.



Alf Hammerstad and Karl Boe taking in the view from the top of Mt. Saskatoon.

arrived. They stayed in the immigration hall for a few days and then boarded a train for the Peace and home. In due time the Hammerstads acquired plenty of land for the growing of grain and for the feeding of cattle.

Alf worked for George Jensen of Valhalla Centre for two years for two more horses, so that with the addition of the daughter of one mare "Daisy" they would have enough to make up a six-horse outfit.

Their first cow was a Holstein from Gust Olson's herd. The other cows were purchased from George Jensen for he raised Ayrshire cattle. With so much hay, lush lake hay, alfalfa and clover, the Hammerstads needed a mill to make silage and roughage, so they discussed just what they should do. The John Deere Co. operated by Allen and Stan Davis had a mill selling for \$1,120.00. What a daring idea, to buy on borrowed money during a depression! They went to Beaverlodge to speak with the banker.

"Gosh," said the banker, "Don't you think it is a lot to borrow and spend these days?"

Alf said, "Well, we have no choice except to borrow or sell the cows." They borrowed the money, bought the mill, and raised steers weighing from 900 to 1000 pounds in a year. "We used that mill as long as we had stock, then sold it to Eric Boe," said Nels.

During the winters of '28, '29, '30, and '31 Alf and William Braaten worked for Lee Borden in the woods. "We had so little sense," said Alf, "that we used a cross-cut saw. We did not know enough to stay indoors when it was 60 below; but kind-hearted Nell Borden convinced us that we must." They were paid \$50.00 a month for this hard, back-breaking work.

Peter, Nels and Alf built their first home on the homestead, a comfortable three bedroom home. They purchased the shingles for this building and shingles for the barn too; but the shingles used on all the other out-buildings were made by the Hammerstads on their shaving machine, rather than the saw-type machine usually in action today. Hans Brudenwold had seen such a machine in Norway, so he made one for them, and from the timber on their land they could make 15,000 shingles per day. They sold some too, for \$1.50 per bundle of 1000. The motor for this machine was purchased from an elevator agent. This was why they wanted land with heavy stands of timber!

Perhaps the greatest tribute to the Hammerstads is that they selected land with enough timber for their buildings, meadow land for hay and pasture and a favourable quota of arable land for grain cropping. Some of their neighbours might have discounted their grey wooded soil but it rated well with much of their homeland. Moreover they quickly responded to soil-improvement practices, such as the use of sweet clover in the rotation. The result was that they always had a good quality hay for their livestock and each year saw an improvement in the workability of the soil and increased crops.

Mrs. Hammerstad always had a good garden of vegetables, currant, gooseberry, raspberry and strawberry plants. "Mother made syrup from carrots during the World War II years and it was sweet enough without adding sugar. She also made syrup from sugar beets," said Nels.



"Mother missed her piano very much for she loved music and could play very well. I played the flute and we'd play together."

"Mother embroidered beautifully, too," said Alf, "and father made two chairs from the willow trees growing on our land. We still have them in our living room."

Mrs. Hammerstad passed away in 1949, Peter in 1957. They will always be remembered by their friends as quiet, kindly and helpful neighbours. They were devout and God-fearing people.

The house they had lived in for so many years caught fire, and, although they managed to save it from being utterly burned, it wasn't fit for habitation anymore, so George Beck and Sherwood Pack were hired to build a new house. They are comfortable in this home for all their treasures are there. The family Bible, printed in 1735 in German and believed to be one of the first books printed has a place of honor. It belonged to their great-great-grandmother. There are several copper utensils made by their great-grandfather. This was his hobby. On the sideboard in the dining room is a mortar and pestle and a lovely copper coffee service. A copper hot-water container formerly used as we now use hot water bottles, was first owned by an aunt, Ingeborg Kraby. An antique clock, bought off E. A. Smith for \$6.00 is still working.

On each of four walls hangs a painting from the Renaissance era. They were purchased by Hammerstads from French refugees who took them out of France in 1789. The ornate gilt frames had been removed and plain wooden frames substituted in order to smuggle them out more easily. They also have a face-relief of Roald Amundsen, the great explorer. Several oil paintings, painted by sister Ruth also grace the home.

Sister Ruth has never lived in the Peace country for any great length of time. She preferred the bright city lights. She was superintendent of the housekeeping department at the Corona Hotel for many years, finally she retired but still makes Edmonton her home. She visits her brothers at least twice a year. She enjoys opera and belongs to other cultural groups and to the Sons of Norway. She is a staunch church supporter as are Nels and Alf. They have been members of the Valhalla Lutheran Church all these years.

Mention must be made of their housekeeper, Mrs. Nora Paulson. She devoted herself to them for 18 years. Nels and Alf hated to retire! The day finally arrived, as come it must to all, and in 1968 they sold to Serle Hanson of Valhalla Centre. They still live in the old home, raising good gardens, raspberries and bumper crops of strawberries. Last year, 1973 they picked a gallon a day and regretted that hail made the crop less than usual and they would have to restrict the amount given to neighbours and to the Home in Hythe.

They are just as open-handed and hospitable as ever and say "hello" with as warmhearted smiles as their parents did. The cups are brought out at once for coffee, too. Cliff Stacey was surprised when he called on them one day, to be served instant coffee instead of the powerful brew Norskies are noted for. Remember the week-long coffee pot of former times?

"Well, we have to keep up with the times." said Nels with a grin.

"The best drink I can get," said Alf, very seriously but with a grin, "is 'Goose Wine'." "What's that?" "Only clear, cold water"

Why not drop in sometime for a cup of coffee or a glass of Goose wine? There is good company in the house by the side of the road.

## THE FLOYD HUGGETTS

Floyd Huggett and his wife Alice, nee Alice Lunam, farmed near Senlac, Saskatchewan for several years before moving to Beaverlodge in November of 1936, bringing with them some 66 head of cattle, 12 horses and machinery via the N.A.R.

Several years previously Floyd had followed the harvest through from Texas to Fort St. John.

For a year Floyd and Alice rented the Hans Ehrensperger quarter north of Saskatoon Mountain then moved and farmed for several years at Lymburn, Alberta.

Floyd enlisted in the Provost Corps in 1940 and soon after went overseas. Upon his return in 1946 they sold their farm and moved to the West Coast. Floyd, Alice and three daughters Marie, Betty and Carol made their home in New Westminster where Floyd was a warden at the New Westminster penitentiary until his death in 1967.

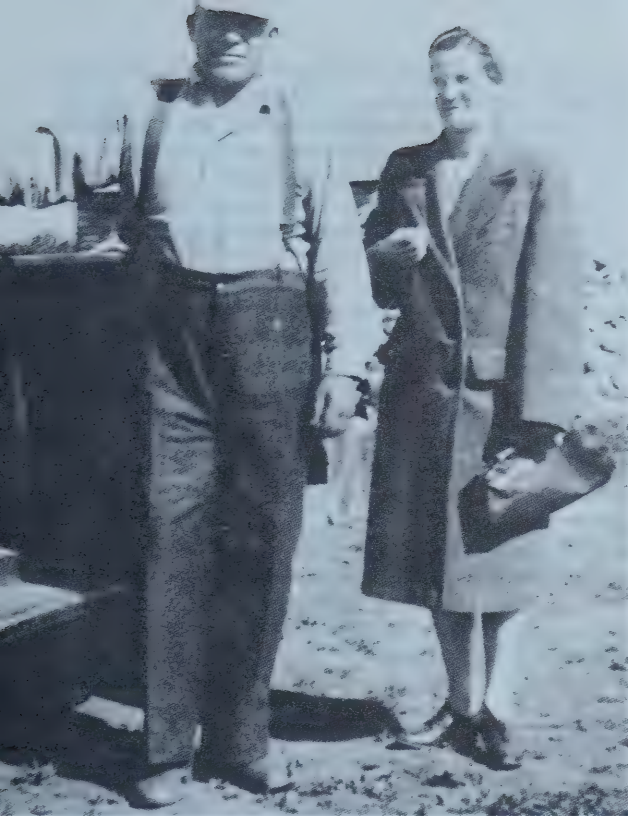
## MAURICE AND LENA LOWE AND FAMILY

Maurice Lowe was born May 1, 1892, in Muskoka district of Ontario and came west with the Lowe family in August 1909 to Stony Plain, Alberta. He worked on construction and freighting on the Grand Trunk Railway, which was being constructed some distance west of Stony Plain. Two years later the family moved to the Winterburn district. Maurice enlisted in the 194th Battalion in Edmonton on March 1st, 1916. His younger brother Chester had enlisted the day before. The two brothers went overseas in November of that year. Maurice was transferred to the 49th Battalion and went to France. He was at the battle of Vimy Ridge in April 1917 and was wounded at Passchendaele in October of the same year. Maurice was wounded again in the fall of 1918 and was in hospital in England when the war ended in November 1918. He was awarded the Military Medal in August 1918.

Maurice returned home in January 1919 and on June 28, 1922 he married Magdelina Suder of Spruce Grove. A year later they moved to Vegreville, Alberta where they farmed until moving to Beaverlodge in February 1927 where they have since made their home.

Maurice and Chester and Ross Cawston drove to Beaverlodge in February 1927 in a 1920 McLaughlin Buick touring car and shipped in a car load of settler's effects. They moved to the Bill Hodges' farm where they lived until the spring of 1930 when they moved to the Jim Allen place. Here the Maurice Lowes lived and raised their family of two boys and five girls. They broke the land and did custom work with horses and a Wallis tractor. Maurice also had a threshing outfit with which he did a lot of threshing for years. Then he purchased one of the first self-propelled combines and still did much custom work.





Maurice and Lena Lowe.



Allen and Bertha Lowe 1928.



Maurice Lowe's first home at Beaverlodge.



Maurice Lowe on his Wallace tractor, 1928.



Maurice Lowe's Buick with prospective passengers 1927.



Maurice and Lena Lowe and family. L-R: Agnes Patterson, Bertha Hauger, Margaret Hodgson, Allen, Beulah Sanderson, Joe and Ruth Albright.



They were very good community workers. Lena was an excellent seamstress. She had a great deal of practice sewing bandages and supplies for the Red Cross during the first and second world wars when the W.I. to which she belonged wanted sewing done. She made many quilts besides doing all the sewing for the five girls and her mending on the family clothes was unsurpassed. She was also active in the Legion Auxiliary.

Many get-togethers were held in the Lowe house; the stove was taken out and set in the porch to make room for the dancers. A lot of traveling and visiting was done between neighbours. There were ball games on the Mountain with home-made ice cream, barn dances at Bertrams, get-togethers at Gordon Cooks and Shorty Hottes. Christmas concerts and socials were held at the Bush Lake school, and the entertainment was enjoyed as the whole community were the entertainers.

Maurice and Lena had seven children. Allen married Annie Schenk, and has six girls, Cheryl, Donna, Denise, Judy, Erin and Wendy.

Bertha married Robert Hauger and has six children; Carol, married to Leonard DeHeus, Maureen, Doris, Ross, Marilyn and Geordie.

Ruth married Gordon Albright and has five children, Maxine, Marion, Donald, Leona and Charline.

Joe married Marjorie Cahoon and has six children, Janice married to David Willsey, Brenda, Darlene, Darcy, Lorraine and Doug.

Beulah married Harold Sanderson and has four children, Debbie, Lester, Lynn, and Cameron.

Agnes married Jim Patterson and has three children, Gail, Ricky and Darin.

Margaret married Jim Hodgson and has three children, Robert, Tanis and Joanne.

Lena passed away February 1971 after a long illness. Maurice now makes his home in the Pioneer Lodge at Hythe.

Maurice donated the house which was the Lowe home, to the South Peace Centennial Museum Association.

#### JOE AND MARJ LOWE AND FAMILY — by Marj Lowe

Joe Lowe was born at Beaverlodge, on the old William Hodges farm, now Albert Cleases. He attended the Bush Lake school.

The morning the old log school was on fire he was sure his school days were over. But as luck would have it, Easter holidays were close and an old car garage on Paul Buhler's was turned into a classroom.

Cliff Beisel's horse kicked and broke Joe's leg in February of 1937. Frank Cunningham carried him to the house. Dad and Frank took him to White's home in town to wait for the train to go to the Grande Prairie hospital. The train tracks were drifted full, and it took a long time to get there. Dr. Nixon came with the team and cutter and took him to Grande Prairie.

There was lots of skating on Hay Lake. Geordie Bond, Robbie Hommy, George Hodges, Dunc and Warren Irvin and several others skated out and caught

a young swan unable to fly and Mrs. Gordon Cook cooked it up for them.

In 1947 Joe went to work for Ted Torgerson in the bush at South Wapiti and spent many winters in the bush and on seismic crews after that.

In 1950 he bought Booth Cook's land. Only 27 acres were broken and Joe cleared and broke the rest.

Marjorie was born at Wembley in the home of her parents, Jim and Nellie Cahoon. Her mother passed away when she was three, and she was raised by her grandmother, Mrs. Marie English, who lived on the Mountain Trail.

She attended the Mountain Trail school until grade seven and then was bussed into Beaverlodge. She took grade eight in Kimberley, B.C. and then came back to Beaverlodge. She boarded at Jack and Gladys Ray's for two years, and I'm sure added to any grey Gladys has in her hair.

In 1949 Marj started work at the hospital and worked there until 1951, when she and Joe were married.

We spent our first year in the "bunk house" at Lowes. In 1952 a small two-room house was built, and we moved into it when Janice was a month old.

There was no well, so water had to be hauled and a nice cold drink was really appreciated.

That first winter Joe and Robert Hauger worked at Groundbirch, so Bertha and Marjorie stayed here with our two babies.

Joe worked for Clarence Lossing for a number of years at Groundbirch and Chetwynd, so we built a one-room shack, and I went to the bush in the winter too, until Janice was old enough to start school.

We had a big eight-legged wood and coal stove that took four strong men to lift. Also an oil heater that would get burning too strong and had to be carried outside to cool off. For a while we had a wooden washing machine with a handle and gears on top and then an old gas washer that would work only if I was in the yard.



Joe Lowe's first home. (L) Marj, Darlene, Grandma English, Joe, Brenda, Janice (R).

We melted snow in the winter for wash water and caught rain water in the summer. The dryer was two clothes horses. Our chesterfield was an old Winnipeg couch that had been in Booth's house.

Our transportation was a 1940 Chev half ton. When our family outgrew it, we had to get a car. In 1958 we had to add on to our house, as it was too small, too.

Our six children were all born in Beaverlodge with Dr. Young in attendance.

Janice is married to David Willsey, lives in Grande Prairie and is a telephone operator for A.G.T.

Brenda is in her second year of college in Calgary and is thinking of a trip to Australia or New Zealand.

Darlene is also working for A.G.T. as an operator in Grande Prairie. Darcy is finishing his high school in Beaverlodge. Lorraine is in grade seven and Douglas in grade six.

We both belong to the South Peace Centennial Museum and the whole family enjoy the work we do there. We enjoy curling with the kids in a few bonspiels, and we all enjoy skidooring.

Our happiest times are when we can do things with all the family home, such as our trips out to Kinuseo Falls, weiner roasts and family bonspiels.



The Joe Lowe family, Christmas, 1973.



The Joe Lowe family, a Sunday ski-dooing.

## OLAF MARTINSON

Olaf Herman Martinson was born in Christianson, later called Olso, Norway. The family lived on an island and had a fleet of fishing boats. The father was a lighthouse keeper.

At the age of 16, Olaf came to Hanley, Saskatchewan where his brother had homesteaded. His parents moved there too but after a year or so, returned to Norway. Olaf took a homestead and he and his brother ran a store and post office at Larson, named after a prominent farmer of the district. When the railroad came through, two new towns, Broderick and Outlook were established. Thus the store was sold and Olaf returned to his farm. Soon afterwards he married and moved to Bawlf, where he bought land. Then his health gave out as he had hurt his spine, and on the advice of his doctor, he decided to move to a new climate. This brought him to the homestead at Beaverlodge, where both he and his wife worked out to make things go. The family recalls that Olaf helped build the Consolidated School at Lake Saskatoon, the brick school in Beaverlodge and the Vendor's building in Hythe. As may be expected, he built boats as a hobby. He died in 1961.

Olaf married Hattie Kinsley, born at Ninette, Manitoba, near Brandon. Her father was English and her mother Scotch and they were farming in Saskatchewan when Olaf met Hattie.

They had a large family. Myrtle married Gwynford Griffith, a mechanic in Dawson Creek. Irene married Joe Anderson of Beaverlodge. Alfred married Betty Henn, and farms near High Prairie as well as working for the D.P.W. Olive married Harry Douglas, and Isabelle, Melvin Ray. Hattie is proud of her 20 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren.

## THE JACK McMURRAYS

Jack McMurray left Stayner, Ontario on a harvest excursion by train to come to southern Alberta. From there he travelled northward until he came to the Peace River country. Here he homesteaded on Saskatoon Mountain.

Here he married May Wilder. There are three children. Shirley Martindale has three boys, Maurice, Raymond and Floyd. Lois married Rick Coldwell and they have a boy, Craig and a daughter, Dana. Robert married Mavis Spencer.

Jack became a builder. There are many fine homes and business places that attest to his ability. In recent years he joined Tissington Construction in Grande Prairie. Now that he has retired from full time construction work his farm has become his hobby.

## CARL HENRY MUSSACK — by Janet Mussack

Carl Mussack was born in Rushville, Nebraska in 1909. He came to Canada in 1927 where some relatives had gone. He filed on a homestead N.W. 16-72-6. He proved up in 1936 and then felt he wanted to see more of Canada so he went to Kelowna, B.C. Carl was by trade a blacksmith and tinsmith. He also had papers as a brakeman. In Kelowna he tried the real estate business. When World War II broke out Carl joined up from Kelowna and served five years with the Royal Canadian Engineers.



It was in Scotland I met Carl and in 1942 I, Janet MacGregor Johnston and Carl Henry Mussack were married. Our first son Kenneth Albert was born in Scotland in 1943, on our first wedding anniversary to be exact. Our second son was born in Beaverlodge some years later. His name is Carl Ronald but we always called him Ronnie.

We arrived in Canada six weeks ahead of Carl and spent the time waiting with some of Carl's relatives at Fort St. John.

In Scotland I had worked in a factory that employed thousands of girls so I knew nothing of farming and life on the homestead was certainly a challenge. I came to love the life on the farm and we were happy there although we had none of the conveniences of today. When I think back to the first time we lived in the bush where Carl was working, I remember what a change it was for me but we coped. Aye! and I remember the bonnie kilt I brought with me from Scotland! We milked cows on the farm and shipped cream which provided the cash to carry on with from week to week until such times as there was some grain or livestock to sell.

Our boys went to school in Beaverlodge and we were happy when Ronald won honors in mathematics in grade 12. Ronnie won a few bursaries to help him through University of Alberta. He majored in computer science. He is now married and living in Edmonton. Kenneth is married and in the construction business in Andrew, Alberta.

Carl passed away eight months after our silver anniversary. During his lifetime we had acquired more land but I have sold the farm now and live in my little apartment in Beaverlodge.

#### SELMAR NELSEN

Selmar, better known as Sam, moved to the United States sometime after 1912. Nothing is known of the years he spent there except that he served in the Army during the First World War.

In 1929 he and some friends drove into Canada and on to the great Peace River country looking for land. Winter came earlier than they had expected so his friends hurried back to the States. For some reason Sam remained behind. He filed on a quarter of land, NE 34-72-9 and began settling in for a long stay. He was lonely many times, as one can imagine, for the States and for the mountains and fjords of Norway but the good neighbours did help him overcome his loneliness.

One such neighbour was Corney Toews, his neighbour to the east. Sam spent many hours there arguing politics and discussing the best ways of building up the soil. "Sam was at our place almost every day as long as we lived there," said Corney. "He sure was a good friend."

Sam and Corney decided that sweet clover should be tried to put fibre into the soil, so they ordered some from Eaton's. How would the pioneers have survived without Eaton's catalogue? It was read more than any other book, other than the Bible. More dreams were dreamed over its pages than parents were aware of, and of course it came in handy in the little, wee house in the back too! The government agreed to pay part of the freight on the order, so at 2 or 3 cents per pound the

seed did not cost so much. What bumper crops they had! The only way Corney could cut the clover was to remove the wind board and the bundle-carrier. They used five pounds of twine per acre and the yield of seed filled 3 granaries! This was from 25-30 acres. The clover straw was purchased by Bert Iselmoe for cow fodder; but his ornery cows would not eat it. Well, Bert decided to use some good old psychology on them, so he and his dog would chase the cattle away each time they came near the stacks. It wasn't long until the cows were eating the straw avidly. Often times, "far pastures seem greener."

Corney Toews helped with the building of Sam's house and outbuildings and then Sam would help him in return.

Sam received a soldier's grant from the United States government every month, so it was not hard for him to hire men to brush and grub out the roots. He farmed with horses for many years before succumbing to the lure of mechanized farming. He purchased a John Deere tractor from Davis and Olsenberg and used this until he sold the farm. He purchased the quarter south of his home place, thus having a half-section to farm.

In 1965 Sam sold his land to two young men, Dr. Bud Haugen, grandson of the late Rev. O. O. Haugen, and David Levis, Judge of the Superior Court in Dawson Creek. Leonard Nepstad phoned to him in Norway, and within ten minutes had purchased the land for the boys.

Sam was a boat enthusiast, having many books and periodicals on the subject. Perhaps this was one reason he returned to his Norway, for he bought a motor boat as soon as he arrived. He lives within sight of the ocean and goes fishing every day or sometimes just sits in his boat and watches the sea or the beautiful mountains.

Sam came back twice to Beaverlodge to visit old friends and settle some important legal matters. He will never return to Canada again as he is getting on in years but one can be sure he will hold dear the years he spent in Canada. His friends will always remember him as an upright man and a successful farmer.

#### ARTHUR SCHAFFTER

Arthur Schaffter was born December 26, 1886 in Moutier, Switzerland. He was a baker by trade and worked in Italy and England. In 1911 he left his homeland along with his older brother, Robert and family for Winnipeg, Manitoba. Here Robert farmed for several years but eventually returned to Switzerland.

Arthur came west to Edmonton in 1912 and later to Grouard where he ran a cafe and theatre. The railroad did not come to Grouard as was expected so Arthur moved to Clairmont where he operated "The Farmers Cafe" for several years. In 1918 he moved to his homestead in the Mount Saskatoon district where he took up farming until 1948. He married Elise Bangerter of Berne, Switzerland, who had previously worked for the Schaffter family in their butcher shop in Moutier. Elise had been married previously and her son Paul Buhler lived with them. Paul later married Elma Elkins who taught at Gimle school. Paul had a

passion for aviation and spent 5½ years in the R.C.A.F. as a pilot and flying instructor and after his discharge spent 22 years flying in Peru for the Wells-Fargo mining operation. They have two daughters, Charlotte and Jacquie. Buhlers now live in Vancouver.

Arthur and Elise had three children. Edith married Ken Price and they have three children, Janice, Judy and Ian. Eleanore is married to George Basaraba and they also have three children, Rod, Darrell, and Donna. Both girls make their homes in Calgary. Bill married Gretta Byers and they have two girls and make their home in Beaverlodge.

Edith and Eleanore took their training at the Royal Alexandra Hospital and became registered nurses.

Arthur was caretaker at the Elementary school for a number of years. Elise operated the Boarding House at the Experimental Farm for a year and a half. She died in the spring of 1951. Arthur moved to Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie in 1966, later to Central Park Lodge.

#### **EDWIN SWENSON — by Libbie Wedell**

Three sons Martin, Phillip and Edwin of Peter and Emma Swenson of Hillsboro, North Dakota came to settle on homesteads at La Glace.

Martin Swenson was the first to homestead and stayed past the horse farming stage into the tractor era. At the age of 83 Martin still lives at White Rock, British Columbia.

Philip Swenson also homesteaded in the La Glace area and lived there until his death in 1970.

Our dad, Edwin P. Swenson was born in Nelsville, Minnesota. After being discharged from the U.S. army he came to Canada and took up a homestead in the La Glace area in the 1920's. On June 23, 1930 dad became a Canadian citizen. About this time he began writing letters to my mom, a young widow.

Mae Margaret Reed was born in Surrey, England and married Horace Highgate. The Highgates left London, England December 21, 1909 and sailed on the S.S. Sardinian. They settled at Abbey, Saskatchewan. Mom married Augustus Hayden Goss, who later was lost in a snowstorm and found dead June 27, 1930.

Edwin and Margaret Goss were married in Edmonton February 11, 1931. Witnesses were Ed's sister, Wilma Swenson and Mae's sister, Ellen (later Mrs. Simon Bakstead).

Mae and Ed Swenson started their married life on the homestead at La Glace. Seventeen-month Libby, Mae's daughter by the former marriage, also started a new life on the homestead.

Apparently dad had kept his correspondence with mom a secret. A betting neighbor lost his bet and gave them his best milk cow, a wedding present he was to give Ed if he married.

A son, Kenneth Hayden was born December 11, 1932 at La Glace. In 1933 Edwin Swenson homesteaded at Cecil Lake, B.C. In 1936 they moved back to Alberta, six miles from a school on the edge of the Valhalla Centre district. Later the same year we bought land three and a half miles straight north of Saskatoon Mountain, previously the Olderskog homestead. The Mount Saskatoon school was three and a half miles

away. It was a log building and after it burned, a new frame building was built a half mile farther away.

Libbie, Kenneth and Lavina, born April 12, 1938 attended the Mount Saskatoon school. In 1948 Lavina boarded in Beaverlodge and went to school there.

Another daughter, Mary Doreen was born December 24, 1944 in the old Beaverlodge hospital — now the nurses' residence.

During the early 40's everyone was growing sweet clover because it was good horse feed. Edwin was very interested in growing new clovers and had small fields of alsike, Altaswede and alfalfa. Most times they didn't set seed.

In the winter he made a living cutting and hauling stove wood to Beaverlodge. He also cut rails and fence posts to sell. Most of the big trees had already been logged.

In 1949 the Swensons with son Kenneth and daughters Mary and Lavina moved to the United States after selling their farm. In 1956 they became U.S. citizens. Their son Kenneth served in the U.S. Army before returning to Alberta in 1956.

The oldest daughter Libbie remained at Beaverlodge, having married Carl Wedell, a farmer, in 1947. They have three sons Roger, Brian and Chris and one daughter Marilyn. Marilyn is in Toronto studying art and planning to become a dress designer, she also works in a jewellery store.

Mrs. Swenson died March 2, 1972 and Mr. Swenson August 5, 1972. They have eleven grandchildren.

#### **JOHN TAYLOR**

John Taylor was a head steward in Scotland and when he came to Canada he worked for the makers of Bain wagons. For a time he farmed at McDonald Hills, Saskatchewan and eventually settled northeast of Beaverlodge. By this time he was an old man and thus he rented his land, first to Ralph Pool, then to Con Clarke. He suffered a stroke and was cared for by Lillian and Con Clarke.

John was a kindly man with considerable reserve.



John Taylor on the homestead.

#### **THE HANS WAELTI STORY**

I was born in St. Galen, Switzerland, in 1904. I lived on a farm with my parents and four brothers and two sisters. The family moved to Reichterwil and there I grew to manhood. I felt the "Call" of far places so I wrote to a friend of mine, John Ehrensperger, about taking a trip to Canada. He was eager to go, so on April 7, 1929, we boarded the S.S. Montcalm and sailed to Canada.



In 1930 we decided to settle in the Peace River country, for here there were wide-open spaces and a promising choice of land. I filed on a 1/4 section half a mile east of the Bush Lake school, and with my friend John taking land not far away, we were able to help each other. We cooperated in the clearing of our land and when we harvested our first crops of oats, I operated the binder while John sat on the truck of the binder and drove the horses. This was dangerous for there were still many roots sticking out of the ground. One day, while sitting there, John gave a yell; he had caught his foot in a root and bent it backwards. I thought he had broken his foot for sure, but it was just bruised a little. He yelled at me to get back on the binder, "We've got no time to lose".

I was one of the first to plant sweet clover to build up the soil. This was in 1935. In the summer of 1937 I donated six weeks of hard labour on the Monkman Pass trail-blazing project.

The years 1939 to 1940 were spent working on the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm. One rather amusing incident I recall was when the late Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir visited the Station, in July or August. All the "would-be big" were there and hoped to be introduced to him. But unfortunately His Excellency was not interested in crowds. He stepped out of his limousine and strode down to the greenhouse with Mr. W. D. Albright trying hard to keep up with him. I stayed over in the far end of the working area in order to avoid being seen but with his determined stride His Excellency entered the greenhouse and I was introduced to him. We shook hands — he had a grip of iron.

I lived in the Peace country eleven years, and then decided that I had better see what the West Coast was like. I left when the temperature was 15° below and there was 15 inches of snow on the ground. I went with Al Carder as far as Calgary and from there I travelled by bus and ferry to Victoria. This was in 1940. The roses and chrysanthemums were still blooming! "This is God's country" I thought, and stayed.

I worked first for an architect of landscaping then in machine fitting. I worked in the shipyards until 1948 and then for two years did odd jobs. In 1950 I began working for Kennametal of Canada, Ltd. and am still working for them.

In 1943 I married Miss Barbara Woolley of Victoria. Both Barbara's parents were English. They emigrated to Victoria in 1905. Her father was a horticulturist. My wife is a school teacher by profession, warm-hearted and charming. We raised one son and four daughters.

Our son Frank is attending the University of Victoria, taking a major in Philosophy. He is married.

Elizabeth is married and has two children, Christopher and Lise, aged four and two.

Edith has a degree in Fine Arts from the same University. She is employed by the Y.M.-Y.W.C.A. as an assistant program director.

Paula works as Nurse's Aide at the Queen Alexandra Solarium, and also studies cello at the Victoria Conservatory of Music.

Caroline finished high school a year ago. She has a strong interest in arts and crafts and is also interested in pre-school teaching.

Next autumn we hope to visit all our relatives in England and in Switzerland.



Hans Waelti.

## SAM WERK

Samuel Ernest Emil Werk was born September 22, 1915 to Samuel and Wilhemina Werk on their homestead near Hatton, Saskatchewan. His parents were German and had come to Canada from Poland in 1912. He was the fourth of seven children. Their first child was a girl, Lydia and their next, the first of six boys died at 2 months. Sam's mother died as a result of a "run away" in 1922 leaving six young children. Lydia, who was 13 at the time raised her brothers. Later, Mr. Werk remarried and had two more children.

The family moved to Melville, Saskatchewan in 1922-23. Sam was making \$10 per month, working on farms when in 1936 he decided to try his luck in Vancouver. Eventually the rest of his family followed and still live in B.C. At the coast, Sam made 30c an hour working 8 hours a day in saw mills. He worked in the mills for five years. He spent two years during the war riveting in the ship yards, half of this time working as an inspector. As a rivetter he had a young fellow "bucking up" for him, that is holding the other side in place while the rivet is being secured. This young man was Vic Mullen of the late Don Messer show. Later Sam worked for Imperial Oil in a refinery "firing stills" distilling crude oil.

Sam married Sylvia Jensen, youngest of a family of 10, who was born in Vancouver, raised at Port Moody and had never lived on a farm or away from the city until they came to the Peace River country. Her



The Sam Werk family—"From 5 in 1946 to 15 in 1973." Christmas 1973.

father, a carpenter, was from Denmark and her mother from England. Their oldest son, Clifford was born November 20, 1937. Lloyd followed on August 24, 1940 and Robert (Pete) on April 10, 1943.

In 1946 Sam and Sylvia came with their three small sons to Beaverlodge. They arrived April 12 and lived in a granary at Arthur Johnson's for three months until Sam got some buildings up. All had been given smallpox vaccinations before leaving the coast and one of the boys took sick on the trip. When they got to Beaverlodge and found a bed he could call his own he wouldn't budge for a week. Mrs. Johnson thought Sam would never make it farming — not realizing he was born and raised on a farm.

Sam started his barn in a heavy stand of spruce and one day when he had a few rounds of logs up he returned from dinner and couldn't find his building and had almost decided he was on the wrong quarter section. Their house, 14' x 20' had no ceiling in it at first and small birds would come in around the rafters. It was near Christmas and cold so that the eggs, water, etc. would be frozen in the morning.

Sam bought two horses from Arthur Johnson and two from Taras Nychka. He bought the tools he needed at Albert Peterson's auction. He broke 10 acres of land in 1947 with his four horses and did custom cutting with a 7-foot binder for the neighbors. Bob and Jim McLaughlin, who worked for Bill Harcourt did the first clearing Sam had done with Bill's bulldozer. Ted McLean and Curtis Johnson also did some clearing. Booth Cook, using Ted McLean's outfit did the breaking. Later Sam broke the remaining 100 acres himself. Sam hauled wood to town for five winters averaging about 100 cords a winter and selling it for \$8 a cord. A lot of hard work went into the delivery of a load of cord wood.

June 26, 1950 their only daughter, Louise, a tiny blue-eyed blonde baby arrived to charm her parents and older brothers.

In 1952 Sam built a small house in town for Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Sutherland as the down payment on the quarter of land he had bought from them. For several years earlier Clifford, Lloyd and Pete had taken milk to the Sutherlands and as they lived by Hay Lake the mosquitoes just about ate them alive. Mrs.

Sutherland always had a treat for the boys. During the rabies scare in the early 50's when the boys were big enough to handle a gun, one of them shot a coyote and decided to play a trick on their dad. They left it overnight and the next day when it was frozen, they propped it up in the field. Sam wasted a few shells before he realized what was going on.

Eventually Sam had enough cattle by trading feed oats to Pat Carrell for cattle, to start selling milk. He had a half-ton truck and began selling 5 gallon cans of milk a day to Pat, who at that time was selling milk in Beaverlodge. He hauled his milk to Pats for a year and then started trucking to NADP in Grande Prairie. One day he was busy watching the boys making hay in the field and drove into the ditch and lost his load. Fortunately the lids remained secure and no milk was lost. The farmers who shipped to NADP were Pat Carrell, Bob Heller, Roy Brown, Clarence Nelson, Ted Thoreson, Dudley Bristow, Harry Weller, Al Truax, Howard Smith, George Robertson and Roy Houseworth. He also picked up cream at the stops in Hythe, Lymburn, Goodfare, Beaverlodge, Hualien and Wembley. It was 100 miles or more the round trip, six days a week most of the time. Over the years Sam had gone to a 3-ton truck to accommodate the growing business and was himself shipping 8 gallon cans a day. He sold the cattle to Harry Weller of Hythe in the spring of 1964 and Clifford took over the truck business.

Sam built a larger barn in 1958 which has since been moved to son Pete's place. They built their present home in 1959 over top of and around the house he'd built originally. As they progressed with the new one they literally threw the old one out the windows. Their home now is comfortable and cozy. Many good times were enjoyed by the boys, Louise and their friends at Werks. They were always made to feel welcome and spent many weekend evenings dancing, listening to loud Rock and Roll or watching television.

Sam and Sylv are attentive grandparents and are proud of all six grandchildren. The boys each have two children. Clifford married Elaine Rollins in 1965, daughter of Melvin and Kay Rollins and their children are Gordon 5, and Krista 1. He works at CFS Beaverlodge and lives on the "Old Town Hill". Lloyd married Joyce Unger in 1964 and they have Holly 8 and Daren 6. He is a serviceman with Alberta Power in Spirit River, living previously in Uranium City, Saskatchewan, Peace River and Grande Prairie. Pete married Joyce Moon also in 1964 and has Steven 9 and Brenda 7. He farms and lives on the former Wally Clarke place. Louise finished Grade 11 in Beaverlodge and worked in Vancouver and Grande Prairie before moving to North Bay, Ontario where she is presently taking further courses to become a stenographer.

#### JAMES WILLARD

George James Willard was born in Dunchurch, Ontario November 17, 1893. He was known to all his friends as "Him" and he had many friends.

Jim lived in Ontario until 1917 when he came west to Oyen, Alberta where he met and married Miss Bessie Braman in 1922. Together they came north to a homestead at Tupper Creek, B.C. where they lived from 1928 to 1938. Jim and Bessie then moved to



Beaverlodge area with eight children and farmed the Alf Kvittum farm. When moving to this farm with a wagon, horses and family a neighbor and to-be friend was heard to remark, "The new people that are moving in must be a bunch 'cause the wagon is full and there are still some walking behind." Well, there were three more to come.

Jim Willard was always ready with a helping hand to friends and strangers. He was the "vet" to anyone who needed him, played the violin at dances for 25¢ a night and acted as auctioneer for the pie socials. He was also well known for his humor and he hasn't lost his ability to tell a good joke, one bit.

Jim and Bessie have 11 children and each one has fond memories of their parents. Bessie of course was always very busy and when the children would quarrel she would say, "Come girls, please sing for me." Very soon peace was restored. Jim played the violin often for the family and relived some of his stories, which the children enjoyed. He could be heard to say to a crying child, "The first nickel I see rolling up a hill I'll give to you." Many are still waiting. There were bills to pay and these were met by selling vegetables and meat; he also gave freely to those in need.

Jim has now retired to live in Grande Prairie after working as the caretaker for the Grande Prairie Golf Course until 1958. In 1972 Bessie and Jim celebrated their 50th anniversary with their own 11 children, 55 grandchildren and 29 great-grandchildren.

Kozey was their first child and she married Art Ellingboe. They now live in Beaverlodge and have eight children. Second came Jean, who married Bill Sask and lives on the farm at Saskatoon Lake. They have eight children and several foster children. Their first boy Gerald lives and works in Grande Prairie. He married Doris Polivere and they have seven children. Merton was fourth; he also works in Grande Prairie and is married to Vera Porter and has three children. Bonnie married Maurice Descoteaux of Grande Prairie and they have six children. They operate a road construction company. Gwen was sixth and she and her husband, Wally Melnyk and their two children live in Edmonton. Jim and Bessie's seventh was Dale. He is a butcher for I.G.A. in Chetwynd and he and his wife Joan Unger have five children. Maxine is eighth and she married Jim Brown; they own the Lloyd Pack farm in the Albright area. Jim works as groundsman at the Beaverlodge Research Station and they have two children. Rhoda is ninth and lives at Creston, B.C. with her husband Jack Cook and their four children. Jack is a butcher. Bud is number 10 and he farms at Sunset House with his wife Deanna Hotte and their two boys. Bud is also a butcher. Karen is the last one and she lives in Grande Prairie with her husband Jack Peters and three children. Jack has a dance band.

#### THE WILDER FAMILY

Lemuel and Emily Wilder, originally from Newmarket, Ontario with their son, Jack and two daughters, May and Mabel, came to Beaverlodge in March 1931, from Pasqua, Saskatchewan, near Moose Jaw. They were all born in Ontario, of British descent, though Lem had spent most of his boyhood in Michigan, U.S.A.

They leased the D. W. Pratt land now the George Carty farm and Mrs. Wilder and girls ran the boarding house at the Experimental Farm. The girls both married; Mabel, in the fall of 1933, to Harry Roberts and May the following summer to Jack McMurray. The McMurrays have two daughters and one son. The Wilders then lived with their son, Frank, north-east of Beaverlodge.

Lem passed away in 1935. Frank joined the armed forces in 1941 and his mother moved into Beaverlodge. She lived here ten years, after which she moved into Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie, passing away in 1953.

Frank is married and now resides in Vancouver; May in Grande Prairie and Mabel in Dawson Creek, B.C.

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#### THE HOMESTEADERS — by Harry Dodwell

The homesteader who built our land — a hardy soul was he.

He took up land and with grubhoe and axe he cleared it tree by tree.

With toil and sweat and elbow grease, and when his day was through,

He came home at night to turnip greens and good old rabbit stew.

The years rolled by, his field got large, his herd of cattle grew.

He said, "Dear, soon we'll eat prime beef and quit the rabbit stew."

But harvest came, the bills rolled in, he's called a farmer now.

No more do horses eat cheap oats and pull the drill and plow.

Gas, fertilizer, taxes — payments overdue

He said, "The grain and calves must go, before these people sue."

"Prime beef," he said, "is now too dear, but here is what we'll do."

"Hamburger from now on we'll eat instead of rabbit stew."

The hamburger was ground hoofs and horns — some sawdust too it seems —

And not the tasty, tender meat he remembers in his dreams.

But on this rough fare, from here on out, he's doomed to chomp and chew.

Though he may dream of turnip greens and good old rabbit stew.

Ah misery me! Oh day of gloom! What can the farmer do?

The rabbit he no more can find to make the rabbit stew.

What does the future hold in store? It seems, before he's through,

He may have to live on turnip greens without the rabbit stew.

Some satisfaction to behold — though homestead days are through —

A country built on turnip greens and good old rabbit stew!



# ELMWORTH

EARLY ELMWORTH AND THE MOYER STORY —  
by Edna Moyer

"When all the world is young, lad  
And all the trees are green;  
And every goose a swan, lad  
And every lass a queen."

These lines from Kingsley express the spirit of every pioneer community. Certainly it was true of the little and as yet unnamed Elmworth district. By the spring of 1920, the time of my arrival, almost every quarter section had its log cabin, whose occupants had high hopes and aspirations, matched with a willingness to work from dawn to dusk to achieve his dreams.

For me it was a wonderful summer. The Brewer home became a home to me, the first since I'd lost my mother as a young child. Even after my marriage, it remained a second home until the Grim Reaper broke up that much-loved community centre, familiarly known as "The Brewery".

Since Elmworth as yet had no post office some one always drove to Halcourt on Saturday for the Elmworth mail bag, and returned to find most of the community waiting in the Brewer kitchen to search for familiar handwriting as the contents were unceremoniously dumped on the floor. When, later in the summer, the district was granted a post office, a list of names was submitted by the authorities for approval but none of them was acceptable. We countered with a list of our own; and Carl Schieldge's suggestion, Elmworth was chosen. At the time we did not question the possible significance of naming our post office after a small pioneer cemetery in Carl's native Connecticut.

A partitioned section of the Brewer kitchen with pigeon holes and all, became the first post office. Frank Brewer was the first postmaster and Ed Johnson the first mail carrier. Later he was succeeded by Theodore Cleland.

Ecumenical services were years ahead of their time in Elmworth — the motives could have been a good meal at the Brewers or Kennys and a friendly get-together. This may be an injustice to the faithful congregations as almost 40 years later a community church was built in Elmworth with all denominations in and around the district participating wholeheartedly.

Due to the severe winters, school was open only during the summer months. After that first summer and my first experience as a teacher, I left for southern Alberta. For several years, summer vacations always brought me back to Elmworth, until I left for Hartford, Connecticut where I lived with an aunt and uncle and taught school for three years. This beautiful capital city, life in a manse, and many new and different contacts were interesting and educational; but the hub of the week centred on Thursday when a letter or letters from Gordon Moyer arrived.

He, not I, was one of the true pioneers. His grandparents, Musselmans and Moyers had come from Pennsylvania, in the early 1800's by Conestoga wagon and settled along the Grand river in the rich soil of Waterloo County. Gordon's belief that a man's land was a sacred trust to be left a little better than he found it, he carried out both by example and precept.

Space here will allow no more than a few remembered highlights. Among these are:

The wonderful August 30, 1929, when our marriage took place in the Brewer home, with the Brewer and





Walking home from the Diamond Dick school. Teacher Edna Small, Jim Ward, Wes and Babe Miller, Bernice Brewer.

Albright families present; also Rev. and Mrs. Bentum and Mrs. Amy Stewart.

The security, comfort and joy of a home of my own with an honorable and devoted husband.

Stories of Gordon's trek from the Smoky, in November 1915, with a heavy pack and no snowshoes — his arches were flat ever after.

Stories of Gordon's first winter in Carl Schieldge's cabin where he and George Grant and Irish Beggs lived on the saddles of five rabbits a day, supplemented by the sourdough bread that George Grant had taught them to make.

The story of his first cabin built with an outlay of \$6.00 for glass and boards for a door; a cabin where it rained for three days inside after it had ceased outside.

His pleasant and profitable years spent with the Albright family on the then "Illustration Station".

The treks to Oakford's store some three or four miles distance carrying 100 pounds of flour home on his back.

Our wonderful gardens of fruits and vegetables; and the hundreds of quarts of vegetables, fruits and meat canned every year.

The long depression years when money was non-existent, but the larder always full.

The two consecutive mornings in the 1930's when the official temperature stood at -71° and -70°.

That happy day when Gordon Jr. became one of the family and who now lives in Ottawa with his wife Alwyn and two children, Gordon Jr. and Kathryn.

The equally happy day, three years later, when Alice Elaine joined our family and who now lives in

Salmon Arm with her husband Dan Taylor and family of five children, Danny, Shari, Terri, Susan and Rodney. Our family are indeed a source of pride and satisfaction.

I recall too:

The many -40° mornings when Gordon left for Beaverlodge 20 miles distance with a load of wheat, with a pillow on the sleigh seat and a lunch which he would thaw out on some of the elevator machinery. There was no money for restaurant meals or livery barns.

The many hours he spent on Wheat Pool and U.F.A. business.

The Seed Growers' Convention in Edmonton in 1949 at which Gordon was honored as a Robertson Associate. This hard-earned honor was given for 20 years of distinguished service in seed growing.

The exciting news over the radio in the autumn of 1951 that Gordon's sample of Victory oats, even after a very early snow, had won the World Championship in the Chicago Hay and Grain Show.

The totally unexpected news in the early spring of 1953 that our sample Alsike had won the World Championship for small-seed varieties.

That blackest of all black days in May 1953 when I walked into the back garden to find him lying on the land he loved, gone as he had wished, "with his boots on" — age 58.

But one must carry on and Grande Prairie was kind to me. There I became a member of the teaching staff, and later of the administrative staff for a total of 18 years until my retirement to Kelowna. But the Peace River District will always be home.

Again Kingsley's:

"God grant that you find one face there,  
You knew when all was young."

In this I am richly blessed.

#### THE FIRST SCHOOL — by Edna Moyer

By 1919 there were sufficient children in the Elmworth area to warrant a school. A board of trustees was accordingly elected, with Franklin Brewer as secretary-treasurer, Jack Ducharme as chairman and Clyde Campbell as third member.

In January of the severe winter of 1919-1920, when Frank Brewer and Jack Ducharme left for Edmonton to purchase cattle under the infamous Cow Bill Act, they were commissioned to find a teacher.

The principal of the Normal School asked all who were interested to meet in one room. Here, Franklin and Jack, in their heavy mackinaws and lumber socks addressed the gathering. After the meeting, Frank remarked that no one seemed very interested. Jack's rejoinder was, "I believe that little fat one in the front seat may apply." And apply she did!

I left Edmonton in late March from the Dunvegan Yards; spent April first in Spirit River as snow drifts blocked the train. Five days after leaving Edmonton we arrived, on a bitterly cold morning, in Sexsmith, to be fed a breakfast of hunks of bread and hot tea. At Clairmont we were told to "get off" — the train could go no further. The late William Sharpe met Mrs. Sharpe who was returning from Toronto; they took me in their sleigh and kindly invited me to their home to





Elmworth's first school, 1920.



Elmworth High School Track Meet Eliminations, 1940. Standing: (L-R) Muriel Cargill, Mollie Cargill, Dorothy Watson, Margaret Burnett, Alec Pandachuck, John Dumbeck, Jim Watson, Easter Miller, Brian Burnett, Marguerite Longson, Sheila Burnett, Alvin Dumbeck, Donald Longson, Edward Miller, Bill Sterr. Kneeling: Noreen Smith, Margaret Miller, Marie Ducharme.



Elmworth school, Grades 1-9, teacher, Marion Heller, 1943.

wait a conveyance from Elmworth, then the Red Willow School District, No. 3791.

Snow on the level was still four feet deep, resulting in only the most necessary travel. After anxiously waiting from Monday until Thursday, I was pleased when Frenchy Billedeau presented a note from Mr. Brewer, indicating that he was to bring the new school ma'am along with his freight rack of groceries and other trade goods. He was leaving the next noon to avoid the bitter morning cold. Frenchy's parting admonition was, "Put on lots of sock."

Perched beside Frenchy on a plank with my feet in the up-ended apple box, which contained a rock heated in the Sharpe's oven all night, we started out on the 40

mile journey to Elmworth. We had gone but a few miles when an old fellow in a long fur coat called out as he opened a gate for us, "That your woman, Frenchy?"

Frenchy was gentlemanly and considerate and tried to keep up a conversation, but his English was so broken that I was often at a loss for response. However, I understood him when we met three men with a load of straw and the inevitable impasse occurred; neither would get off into the soft, deep snow to pass. Frenchy's oft repeated answer to their profanity was, "If I didn't have this woman with me, I'd show you who'd be in the snow first." Eventually they compromised and the heavy team was hitched to Frenchy's freight rack and it was drawn around the load of straw.

When Frenchy stopped his sleigh at the Watsons near Wembley for repairs, I had the pleasure of enjoying the friendliness and hospitality of the Watson home, although Emily and Agnes were the only members present. Never did Christmas cake and coffee taste so good!

After spending the night at the Bill Bernards, on to the Beaverlodge river the next afternoon, Frenchy with great relief, I'm sure, turned me over to the kindly and hospitable Brewer home.

Though well into April, it had been too cold to ready the Diamond Dick log cabin for school. This 12' x 16' cabin stood about where Wes Miller's barn stands today. Blackboards and desks were in place. When weather permitted several of the women of the community, myself included, attacked it with brooms and mops while the men went to the Jack Pine ridge for a flag pole.

On opening day 16 pupils, ranging in age from 5 to 15 years, arrived to inspect the new and nervous teacher. I still take a keen, personal interest in each one and number many of them among my closest friends. To me, and I hope to my students, we seemed one family, decorating our cabin with crepe paper curtains, constructing stone walks and even attempting a garden.

Several of my pupils were teenagers, as I was, so we enjoyed many activities together, not the least of which were raspberry picking expeditions to the Wapiti with wagons, saddle horses, tents, and an abundance of food. After sliding down the north bank, crossing the river and picking huge ripe berries in the dead-fall all day, a weary but happy crew clambered up those Wapiti banks toward evening with pails and anything else that would hold berries piled high. A sing-song around the fire, always including "Juanita", and we were ready for our bed of spruce boughs made by Carl Schieldge who often, as a joke, "spiked" them with a particularly scratchy old bough.

Days were relieved of monotony by the amusing quirks and sayings of the pupils. I remember "Dee Dee" (Juliana Oakford) saying, "Dee Dee don wana do dat," and my first drop-out, five year old Ralph Hagen who fell in the near-by creek and was sent home with an overcoat covering his wet clothes. He never repeated the performance. I cannot remember a cross word being spoken in that school and discipline was an unneeded word.



Looking back, I realize my inadequacies as a teacher. I can only hope that youthful enthusiasm, hard work and love for my pupils compensated for lack of experience and general knowledge.

### ELMWORTH SCHOOL

One year after the post office was established at Elmworth, a new, one-room log building was finished to serve as a school for the district. The settling of many hotly contested issues culminated in the opening of the building at a "schoolwarming" on January 2, 1922. To celebrate the opening F. Brewer, Bill Barr and Charley Cornelson presented a play "Advertising for a Husband." Miss Small put on a sketch "Getting Rid of an Agent" and many sketches, violin and piano music with vocal solos were added to round out a most enjoyable and entertaining evening for about 100 people. Colored tissue held against kerosene lamps made footlights for a Christmas tableau.

The building was anything but mosquito or mouse proof. Many a teacher was startled by a mouse in a drawer or cupboard. One young fellow told of having a hole in the floor beside his desk through which a mouse would pop periodically. One day he made plans for catching this wary rodent. He put crumbs around the hole, loaded his wooden pencil box with marbles to make it heavy and sat with it poised above the hole. The mouse cautiously put its nose through the hole and reached for the bread. The boy tensed ready for the drop just as the teacher cuffed his ears and told him to get back to work. The pencil box went flying and the mouse scurried off.

In 1937 two rooms were operating under E. (Alice) Taylor and W. B. Mitchell with 49 pupils and grades one to nine. A long line of teachers followed; many stayed to marry farmers in the district and returned to the school through the years as the need arose.

F. Shannon, Reta Ash, Mary (Turner) Pandachuck, Jean Pow, Marion Heller and Agnes Patterson worked in the two-room situation. However, the war brought about a shortage of teachers and in 1942 one room was closed.

Miss Heller returned to take on the task of teaching over 30 children on all grades from one to nine. She was followed by Amy (Sharland) Pandachuck, Edna Moyer, Florence (Reimer) Purves and Supervisor Jean Purves.

The fall of 1949 saw two new rooms under Mary Pandachuck and Alice Wood with Dorcas Dalglish in the original log building. J. D. Noble, Wilma Reid and Edith Lee entered the system at this stage. A bus was now bringing children from Craigellachie and Hazelmere districts.

In 1952 another room was added and Elnora Barker and Ferne Finch joined the staff.

At this time the Hazelmere School was moved onto the side of the building and a new room built on to increase to six rooms with W. Taylor, and Ron Quinn coming onto staff. Stella Holtz and Dina White taught the next year.

1955 brought the addition of a staff room, two classrooms and a Science Lab., and Ethel Hill was the new teacher. We were now offering to grade eleven.

The final addition was a gymnasium, library,

classroom, washrooms and office. Marilyn Ayre was the only newcomer to the teaching staff but by now students were being bussed in from Haven, Ravenswood, Itipaw, Rio Grande and Cariboo. V. McNeil, Frank Vanderkley, Grant Henderson, Helena Pretyluk, Cecile Dixon, Mr. and Mrs. McCue each took a turn teaching. Then the trend changed. Our High School students were taken to Beaverlodge. At time of writing we are still operating with grades 1 to 9. New staff faces in recent years have seen Stephen and Edna Charlesworth, John Reed, Joseph Waters and Tom Brown.

### THE LOCAL SAWMILL

There was need for lumber by the pioneers, and the taking out of bridge timbers on a quota basis allotted by the government to each settler was a relief measure. It prompted Rusty and Steve Johnston to set up their sawmill on top of the Wapiti bank on Hans Hoglund's land in 1938. To get the logs off the river up the steep hill to the top required the building of a track. This was made of peeled spruce poles, a "sloop" to haul the logs on and a cable winch powered by a tractor to hoist them up. This was engineered and operated by Albert Funk. It proved a very efficient way to get all the material to the top of the hill. Later the mill was moved down the river to the Gunderson place.



The lumber hoist on the Wapiti hill.



In 1944 Eli Pandachuck operated a mill on the same site and it was during this time that material for the building of the Elmworth hall was sawn. The logging was done by a few of our local men as a contribution to the Elmworth community.



Rusty Johnson's saw mill, 1939.

### SOME EARLY STUDENT MINISTERS — by Edna Moyer

The history of Elmworth would not be complete without some mention of the early Methodist student ministers, all of whom held services in the Brewer home.

Mr. Horne, an ordained man and our first minister was followed by Oral Puffer who died of a ruptured appendix soon after his arrival, alone, I believe in a make-shift Lake Saskatoon Hospital.

Then there was jolly Tom Gilroy. People teased him to such an extent that he finally one day remarked, "The only place I can find sympathy is in the dictionary."

Arthur Thorpe who came next, had started his apprenticeship as a blacksmith in England. In a subsequent visit we found he had cultivated his natural musical talent.

Russell O'Brien, worked with the young people. Strangely, he turned up at the Hartford Seminary some years later when I was in that city. On one occasion he took my uncle's evening service. Being quite short he was completely hidden when he sat down in the pulpit. A friend beside me facetiously remarked, "Edna, where's the minister?"

Bill McDannold was the last of the student ministers of my early years and the only one of whose whereabouts I know. After a long and successful career he and his lovely wife retired in Edmonton.

These earnest, hard-working but fun-loving young men made their rounds on horseback and were commonly known as "Sky Pilots".

Anglican Church service at Elmworth, with Rev. McSherry and Rev. Batton.



Student minister Tom Gilroy with Brewer family.



A W.A. Group at Nell Walker's, 1934.



The Elmworth Community Church. Rev. R. C. Gates in the doorway.



## ERNIE AHERNE

Ernie Aherne, an Irishman, came here from Quebec in about 1928 and lived along the Red Willow, south of what is now Tom Hattons.

He often had two nephews staying with him. They too came from Quebec, and though they were Irish, spoke only French when they came here. One nephew, Lewis joined the forces in World War II and now resides in Quebec.

Ernie Aherne left here in the early 40's and lives in Vancouver. He had 40 acres in Sardis Valley.

## OTTO AND KATIE BALL

Otto, with his wife Katie and her mother Mrs. Rose Wood came in 1919. In failing health, Mrs. Wood died about 1926. They farmed across from J. Ducharme's. Katie died in 1943. He continued farming for a few years then retired to Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie where he died.

Neighbours recall the Balls as mild-mannered, cultural people somewhat unfit for the rigors of pioneer farming. Otto did try to produce better crops and made a specialty of sweet clover seed production.



Mrs. O. E. Ball and her dogs.

## JOHN BANCESCO FAMILY

John came from Regina in 1928 and took a homestead. In 1936 he and Adele Connell were married.

John became invalided in the 1940's, hence son Keith who lives at home carries on the farm work. Cattle and pigs have been the mainstay through difficult years. While John was ill, Keith was able to work out during three winters at oil rigs and his mother did the chores. He also worked at a lumber camp at Mile 101 for two winters. When Adele was unable to do the chores because of care for her invalid husband and the housework, Keith took over entirely. Both Adele and Keith play in a dance band occasionally.

Johnny advises people not to go into a wheel chair if one can somehow manage to get around without it as it spoils a person. In 1935 he had a cast put around his body to help relieve a condition of his spine and was able to carry on with spring work. For two months in 1973 he was in Edmonton taking therapy but the good results were only temporary.

The Bancescos have two other children, Beverly the eldest lives in Prince George and they have five

children. Douglas, the youngest lives in Edmonton and was married in 1973.

## WILLIAM BARR — by Edna Moyer

As a boy William Barr emigrated from Scotland with his family to the Huntsville area of Ontario. Dissatisfied with the limited opportunities of northern Ontario, Bill, as a young man, joined the Yukon Gold Rush of '98. After 13 years in the Klondike, he realized that it was time to settle down so he headed for the newly opened Peace River country and in the spring of 1916 homesteaded the quarter that is now the Glen Smoke home.

Here, Bill was one of the fortunate settlers who "got on" the bridge gang, the only paying job in the whole Red Willow area. When Dan Bailey, the boss, died, Bill bought his team and gave his dogs, Mutt and Darkey a good home. The morning ritual of Bill feeding Mutt, Darkey and his own dog and cat was a precision performance worth seeing. The animals lined up in order, each one catching his own pancake as Bill tossed it to him. This continued until the supply was exhausted.

Bill was energetic, impatient and possessed a fund of knowledge gained from wide reading and many varied experiences.

When he timidly proposed to Miss Alice Roofe, the current teacher, he had little hope of acceptance. She, on the other hand, had been considering just such a situation and sorrowfully confessed that she was older than he, six months as it turned out. Jubilantly, Bill exclaimed, "That removes the last barrier. I feared that I was too old for you."

Alice was a walking encyclopedia; her experience in practicality was limited. Bill jokingly remarked, "If Alice ran a wheel barrow, someone would have to grease it for her." He was never anything but kind and patient with his remarkable wife.

One incident, which greatly embarrassed the Barrs, but afforded the isolated community some amusement, occurred one stormy winter night as Alice and Bill were returning home from a visit to Alex Thompsons. Alice had a blanket over her head to protect her against the storm. Knowing that they were off the trail, Bill stopped the horse and got out to locate a fence. After some time King started up; Alice, huddled under the blanket, thought that Bill had returned, so Old King jogged the four or five miles home; bumped over a few logs and stopped in their



William Barr, Joe Dickinson, Edna Moyer, Alice Barr, Gertrude Dickinson, 1932.

own yard. To Alice's consternation, when she prepared to alight, there was no Bill beside her. He, on the other hand, was frantic to find that Alice and King had vanished into the storm. He hurried back to Thompsons and Alex rushed him home in his Model A just as Alice was attempting to unhitch King. Everyone was sworn to secrecy, but it was too good to keep.

#### **FRENCHY BILLEDEAU — by Edna Moyer**

A picturesque character of early Red Willow days was Frenchy (Joe) Billedeau. Frenchy, orphaned at an early age, was raised by priests in Quebec. He was lively and quick-witted and one can readily see that priests may have had good reason for punishment frequently meted out to Joe. Always resourceful, he conceived a unique form of revenge, a very personal, unorthodox and definitely unholy way of replenishing the supply of holy water.

Quite characteristically, Frenchy became a coureur-de-bois. For some reason he came to the Elmworth district as a trapper and in the earlier days wore the typical coureur-de-bois flashy outfit, a colorful toque and wide wool ceinture.

To secure a trapline where fur bearing animals abounded and far from those already registered, he surveyed the territory around Wapiti Lake, headwaters of the Wapiti River and here he staked out his permanent trapline. Burgess Longson, who as a young boy accompanied Frenchy on this expedition, tells of the time he (Burgess) literally "spilled the beans". Frenchy insisted that he retrieve every bean from the snow-covered ground as they were miles from food. Burgess still tells of Frenchy's tales of his earlier years, of his love of children and of his kindness to his dogs.

At one time Frenchy and Jim Grant ran a small trading post in a cabin at the present Jim Frame home but love for the wilderness and the lure of the forest again called Frenchy and for a number of years he continued to trap on his old rounds.

Illness finally forced the old runner of the woods to seek quiet and peace. This he found in the Allison home and here he passed away some time in the 1930's.

To those who were privileged to know him he will remain a bright and interesting spot in many faceted mosaic that was the Elmworth of pioneer days.

#### **EDGAR BOUSEFIELD**

Edgar (Slim) Bousefield lived in Grande Prairie before moving to Elmworth in 1917. When homesteading regulations permitted he returned to railroading for a spell. In 1931 he married Edna Battersby of Victoria.



The bridge built between Jim Grant and Slim Bousefield's homestead. Crew—Jack Ducharme, Bill Barr, with team. Jim and George Grant, Bill Thompson (cook) and foreman Dan Bailey.

The Bousefields were good neighbors and Edna was very active in W.A. and W.I. work. In 1947 they retired with their two girls, Doreen and Marjorie, to Victoria.

#### **WESLEY J. BOYD**

Wesley had lived in the U.S.A. and taught school somewhere in Ohio. He had relatives in Grande Prairie so decided to file on some land and came to Elmworth to file on the S.W. quarter of section 16. He was known here mostly as Professor Boyd. He farmed, proved up his land and worked for his neighbours at times of earn a little extra money. He was a very neat person. Mrs. Alec Thompson said he asked for a white linen table napkin when he ate there.

After a few years here he sold his farm to Mr. Frank Sterr and retired in Grande Prairie.

#### **“THE BREWERY” — by Bernice Pandachuk**

Franklin T. Brewer was born in New Brunswick and came west to Lethbridge in 1903. He worked at various jobs before becoming an undertaker.

He married a music teacher, Alice Tiffin and in 1916 got Peace River fever. He and George Wighton caught one of the first trains over the E.D. and B.C. to Grande Prairie. There they hired John Strong of Halcourt, with his mules and buggy to bring them to the Red Willow district. There were hopes of a railway as surveys had been made, one near here. The two men filed next to each other and returned south. A few others had filed in the district previously.

The next spring they returned with carloads of household effects and machinery, built log houses and broke garden spots. In 1918 the Brewer family, Frank, Allie and daughters Bernice and Frances arrived to stay.

The famous government “Cow Bill” came into being in 1919 and dad and Jack Ducharme were appointed by a five member cattle association to go to Edmonton to buy cattle. It was an eventful trip and after about ten days they arrived back as far as Spirit River with two carloads of cattle. The train could go no farther as the snow was too deep and it was 50 below zero. The cattle were unloaded and driven on foot the last 80 miles — it took four days. Beef prices slumped and the whole venture, province wide, was written off. Feed was scarce and Russ Walker was traded lumber to roof his barn for the straw that was on it.

One day a roof raising bee was held and our cabin sported an upstairs. This made room for the post office and government telephone in one corner of the kitchen.

Both parents became very active in church and community life. “The Brewery” became the centre where most community activities were held — church, meetings, field days, demonstration suppers and election polls. It was headquarters for district nurses, ministers and teachers. School was even held for a couple of weeks in an upstairs bedroom while the teacher, Miss Alice Rooft was confined to bed with a sore leg. Mother was also barber for the district. The latchstring was always on the outside and an extra plate was on the table.

There were the usual wood buzzing and ice cutting bees. Much of the ice was used to make the gallons of homemade ice cream consumed each summer.





Cattle in the Frank Brewer feed lot.



Ira McLaughlin, MLA, Frank Brewer and Robert Cochrane.

Many a winter evening the driving horses with bells were hitched to the cutter to take us to a musical or social evening at Rio Grande, Halcourt or Beaverlodge. Each winter, equipped with charcoal footwarmers, hot rocks and a crockery "pig" filled with boiling water to keep us cozy warm under a pile of blankets on top of a sleigh box of straw, we'd make a three day trip to Grande Prairie for provisions. Wheat was taken to Wembley to be milled into flour.

Dad bought Ed Johnston's place when Ed moved to the coast, and we moved to live there and we started a store about 1927. It was later sold to Joe Dickinson.

Mother passed away in 1940 and five years later dad married an old family friend, Mrs. Myrtle Campbell. A couple of years later they moved to B.C. and rented the farm to Ed Bressler. The ties of the Peace were



Miss Lemoin O'Neill, the first district nurse, riding Brewer's horse Snip.



too strong and they soon moved back. Dad passed away in 1961 and Mrs. Brewer and Frances stayed on the farm a while before moving for health reasons, to Grande Prairie to live with daughter Isabel Campbell. Mrs. Brewer passed away. Frances is in Red Deer, Isabel in Grande Prairie and Bernice Pandachuck still lives near Elmworth.

#### THE BURNETTS — by Eileen Burnett

She may not have been a beauty, but striking she must have been for some 50 years later an old bachelor could still remember not only the month and day but the exact hour that Dick brought his young auburn-haired bride to his homestead on the northeast of eighteen in the fall of 1921. They had both come a long way to get there.

Dick was born in Cardiff, Wales. His family emigrated to the United States when he was in his early teens, settling at Niagara Falls. Still, the native strain remained strong. His children knew early that being Welsh was not being English. He came to the Peace country in 1916 and filed on his homestead on October fourth of that same year. But there was a war on so he went into Grande Prairie and enlisted. He was sent overseas and the Armistice found him just a few miles outside of Paris. It was on one of his leaves that he first met Margaret Scallon.

Peggy was born in 1897 in Wexford, Ireland. She was a teenager in Dublin during the 1916 Easter Rebellion. That's probably why her children learned the Irish rebel songs before O Canada. She joined the WAACs and was stationed in London. When the war ended she came to Toronto, where she worked as some lady's Irish maid. There, she and Dick met again and were married on June 13, 1921. Then they headed west where his homestead waited.

Dublin, London and Toronto had done little to prepare Peggy for pioneering in Elmworth. One evening Dewey Ducharme found her standing on the door sill. She couldn't come out — there were coyotes out there. She couldn't go back in either — there was a mouse in there. She tried a bachelor's recipe for bread which said, "After you put it in the pan, go out and do the chores." Having no chores to do, she popped it straight into the oven, and eventually fed it to the pigs. One day she went down to the creek for water. She was



The Burnett family, 1952.

half way back up when her young daughter, Eileen appeared at the top yelling, "The baby fell out of bed."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes." She put down the two pails and started to run.

"He's crying like the devil." She went back and picked up her buckets.

Together they raised a family of eight. Their first child was born on March 24, 1922. Both Eileen and Sheila were born at Dewey Ducharmes with the aid of that intrepid English nurse Miss Watherston. During one of the worst blizzards of the year Brian was born at home. By that time a bigger hospital had been built in Grande Prairie and country mothers would spend the last couple of weeks of their pregnancy in town. So, Margaret, Maureen, Patricia and Geraldine were born in Grande Prairie. On March 27, 1941, history repeated itself and Richard Junior was born at home.

When the children scattered, they carried with them loves that they had known when the log cabin was home. They still find beauty in the redwing's song, the sun going down in a blaze of glory, and in anything that blooms, from a lowly white violet to an exotic lavender orchid.

#### THE CAMPBELLS — by Isabel Campbell

When my parents, Clyde and Myrtle Campbell, left Toledo, Ohio in 1919 to homestead in the Red Willow district of the Peace River country a year and a half before their community would be known as Elmworth, it was to experience for the first time life outside the well-ordered conveniences and amenities of large cities.

Rejecting his mother's ambition that he continue as a concert pianist, my father began his adult life as a pharmacist, later going into chemistry to become Willys Overland's first chemist at Toledo and installed that company's first three laboratories. When the United States entered World War I and following a post-graduate course in metallurgy at Harvard, he was commissioned general supervisor of the Metallurgical Branch of the Ordinance Department responsible with the assistance of two men under him for supervising heat treatment and heat treating equipment of artillery ammunition. My father had, under his personal inspection alone, 144 ammunition plants, of which 44 were in Canada.

While in Canada on periodic inspections he was attracted to posters and newspapers advertising Alberta's Peace River country with its inducement of 160 acres of free land for homesteading. It wasn't until after the Armistice and he was home again in Toledo with health seriously affected by demands of his war work that he heeded his doctor's advice to "get out in the country for a while, away from industrial strains and tensions" and remembered what he had read about the Peace River country.

At first my parents planned the venture into unknown wilds of northwestern Canada as a glorified camping trip, to last no longer than a year, during which time my father would recover his health, restore his shattered nerves and return to Toledo refreshed and ready to continue in his profession.



Instead, he decided to remain in Canada, and on April 29, 1919 filed on SE 5-70-11-W6.

By August 5, that year my mother and I had joined him, thrilled to set up housekeeping in a real log cabin, excited to begin a new life on the kind of rough frontier we had only read about. Although the 1920's were years of agricultural depression during which the Peace River country in general and my parents in particular were to hope in vain for the construction of a promised railroad that would offer the needed Pacific Coast outlet and markets for all they could produce, their faith in the country and their resolution to remain despite severe economic stress never wavered.

My father almost immediately became involved with organizational activities which would promote the welfare of the community. At the October 23, 1920 meeting of the Red Willow School District No. 3791 he was named chairman of the board; in March 1921 he was instrumental in establishing the Good Roads Association and that October was named secretary-treasurer of the newly organized United Farmers of Alberta local. In addition, he was one of the founders of the cattle association. Later, winters were spent at his typewriter working on fiction.

By 1924, two goals were reached: proving up and Canadian citizenship. But my parents' dream of forever making their home in the Red Willow district they loved was not to be realized. As my father's health continued to deteriorate it became evident that he must return to Toledo to seek medical help, which the family did in 1928. There the diagnosis was nephritis or Bright's disease and he was given three months to live, although medication afforded him some respite.

Before his death at age 44 April 19, 1930 one of his short stories was published in the November 15, 1929 issue of Maclean's magazine.

Memories of the Canadian northwest were kept alive and green during the 15 years of my mother's widowhood. Although she never expected to see the country again, in 1945 she returned to Elmworth as the wife of Franklin T. Brewer, Alice Brewer having died five years before. Their marriage of nearly 17 years ended with the death of Mr. Brewer October 31, 1961. My mother died October 9, 1964.

After I returned to Toledo with my parents in the spring of 1928 I received training in journalism and in 1930 had my first break on the Daily Sentinel at Bowling Green, Ohio.

In 1934 in Olympia, Washington I was appointed supervisor for Thurston and Mason counties on a research project for a book on the State of Washington and during that time developed a special interest in Washington's history. At the conclusion of this work I became feature writer and weekly columnist for the Daily Olympian, a position continued later in conjunction with that of staff historian for the State Reference Library. During this period I was frequently requested by Gov. Martin and the Secretary of State as well as by other state officials to write historical background for their speeches. I was also honored to be invited to write a piece which was placed in the cornerstone of

one of the government buildings under construction in the State Capital group.

In 1945 I accepted the post of assistant to the new director of the Washington State Historical Society Museum in Tacoma. In addition to other duties I researched and wrote various booklets on Washington's history including that commemorating the 1845-1945 Washington Centennial and prepared a condensation of The Oregon Boundary Settlement Question under the title "The Boundary Treaty Centennial 1846-1946" for distribution at the celebration held by United States and Canada at the Peace Arch, Blaine, Washington.

For family reasons I returned to Canada in February 1951 and that July became associated with the Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune until retirement in 1968, having throughout all these years transferred my interest in historical background to the Peace River country. In 1968 my book "Grande Prairie — Capitol of the Peace" was published and since then, other works along historical lines have been accomplished.

### THE FRANK CARBERT STORY

In June, 1915 in company with J. M. (Silver Tip) Campbell, I left Edmonton by train. At that time Round Lake (McLennan) was the end of the line. From there we walked to the Smoky River where we boarded the river boat, the Northland Call, for Grande Prairie. Because of the very high water the river channel was uncertain and the boat was often held up on sandbars. When this happened men passengers had to push and pull the boat to put it on course. It was here I met the mosquitoes of the north. We left the boat at Smoky Landing and walked the remaining 18 miles to Grande Prairie.

The following day we walked to Spring Creek. From there a friend of Mr. Campbell's took us with team and wagon to Lake Saskatoon where Mr. Campbell's daughter, Mrs. Chas. Conley lived. After resting a few days we joined a group of newcomers seeking homesteads. This trip took us through the Beaverlodge and Hythe country. We weren't pleased with anything we saw so went through the Rio Grande district and crossed the river at Avery Kenny's. Here I left the group and finally located a homestead in what is now the Elmworth district. I was the third man to locate on the southside of the Red Willow river. Diamond Dick Harrington and George Dumbeck were the other two.

I built a cabin on the creek bank and spent the winter there with Fred and Jesse Hartnell. That winter of 1915 and 1916 many other landseekers came, including Curly Moyer, Ernie Harding, the Grants and Bill Oakford, who built a store beside the creek. Others followed and the available homesteads were soon filed on.

In 1920 I married Alice Embree, the first teacher at the Rio Grande school. Later that year I sold my homestead and we moved to New Westminster. From there we moved to the Okanagan Valley where I farmed for over 40 years. At present we are living in a Pioneer Home at Enderby. We are both active and have good health.

We have a family of five, three sons and two daughters. Our eldest son lived for 12 years on a ranch

five miles from Peace River. He has lately moved to Ponoka where our youngest daughter lives. One son lives in Calgary, the other one has taken over the family farm. Our eldest daughter lives near by. There are 20 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

We have had several trips back to the Beaverlodge and Elmworth districts and regret that there are so few old timers with whom to visit.



Mrs. Maye Carbert and children, Gordon, Leslie and Maynard.

#### MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM CARGILL

I came to Canada from England in 1923 with my husband who had been homesteading here for a number of years.

It was a tedious journey by train to Grande Prairie and we still had to get to Elmworth. We got a ride with the mail carrier, Mr. Cleland. I stayed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Brewer for a few weeks until our home was ready.

I was just a greenhorn as they used to say but Mrs. Brewer was so kind and taught me everything I needed to know about cooking, canning and other facets of homestead life.

Of course it was the days of the horse and buggy and coal oil lamps. It was a lonesome life but I got to love it. The people were kind and friendly. We enjoyed the social life of school concerts, suppers, club meetings held at different homes. Even berry picking was a special outing for the girls, Molly and Muriel.

When we sold our farm we moved to Calgary where Billy owned a lot with a little house on it. The girls had preceded us to finish their education and work.

Billy passed away shortly after and I am now living with Muriel and her family in Calgary. Molly is in Edmonton.

#### BILL CHITTICK

Bill Chittick was a bachelor and the neighbourhood carpenter. There is still furniture that he made in the district. He rode a sorrel mare sitting very erect in his saddle. He had a hardwood floor in his neat little cabin, something unique at that time. He passed away some years ago.

#### CLARENCE AND EMELINE COLTON

In the spring of 1928, Clarence and Emeline Colton and their infant daughter Shirley, moved from High Prairie to Mrs. Colton's parents, the Ernie Cowells, at Hermit Lake, west and north of Grande Prairie. It was

here that Clarence heard that Franklin Brewer of Elmworth wanted breaking done, so he and his father-in-law, Ernie Cowell came to Elmworth and broke land all summer. Emeline came out and lived in a cookhouse and cooked for the men. While out there they purchased land from Oakfords and broke 30 acres on it as well. In the fall Emeline went and stayed at her folks, while Clarence remodeled the house and other buildings on the quarter. We understand the farm had been known as Wighton's place. In the spring of 1929, the Coltons moved onto their homestead quarter. Here two boys were born to them, Eugene in 1929 and Wesley in 1931.

In the spring of 1934, the family rented the William Barr place, now owned by Glen Smoke, and lived there for five years. In the spring of 1939, the family moved to the Sid Watson place and lived there until the end of June. Clarence became ill and passed away in 1939. Emeline and the three children lived at Dimsdale for two years with her parents after which she and the children moved to High Prairie. She worked in a variety store for several years then purchased the store and made it into a Robinson Store. After 19 years of store work she sold it and retired. She still lives in High Prairie.

Wesley, at the age of seventeen, became an employee of Imperial Oil, worked for them 12 years, then started a men's clothing store in High Prairie, sold it and purchased a farm just four miles from town. He married Eloise Raper from Bashaw, Alberta and they have four children.

Shirley graduated from high school in 1946, and came to supervise a school in the county of Grande Prairie, where she met and married Allan Chugg, in 1948. They live east of Grande Prairie. Allan is a farmer and a livestock dealer. They have four children.

Eugene at the age of 19 became an employee of Imperial Oil, and is still with the company working out of Inuvik, N.W.T. He married Chris Flondia from Inglis, Manitoba. They have five children and live in Calgary.

#### J. CARL CONNELLY

I, Carl Connelly came to the Peace River country from Saskatchewan in 1929 to get away from the dust storms and to try to carve out a place to live away from the depression and I have been here ever since through good times and bad. We settled in what was to be known as the Sylvester district. Later the post office and general store were operated by Riley Elliott for a number of years. At that time there was a big influx of people into this area mainly on account of conditions on the outside as people were trying to locate in a more prosperous part of this dominion where land was cheap. Like most districts we soon found out we had to have schools and roads.

In 1934 a log school was built with volunteer labour and put in operation for the magnificent sum of \$145. Miss Stella Hohol, now Mrs. Albert Holtz was our first teacher. I was a member of the Itipaw school board while it was in operation. It was closed in 1948 due to centralization. Many good times were had in this school as it was used for dances, games, meetings, etc.



In 1939 I married Margaret Isley and we raised nine children, now mostly all grown up and away on their own. Most of the land was taken up by the early thirties. R. G. Belvedere was the first settler, taking up N.W. 7-69-11-W6 in the year of 1927. He was an elderly man originally from Texas and had been on his own since 8 years of age. He never was in a hospital, grain elevator, or store other than a small frontier store as he spent his life in remote areas. This place he homesteaded had been leased by two men who came in 1919 to raise cattle. However this did not succeed and they gave up the cattle raising venture and left. Frank Smith worked for them while they were here and built the first homestead buildings in that area.



Carl Connelly on the way to trap line, 1941.

#### JOE AND GERTRUDE DICKINSON

Joe Dickinson was born in England and came to Canada at an early age and married Gertrude Boutillier. They moved to Grande Prairie where Joe travelled for P. Burns and Co. Shortly after, he purchased F. Brewer store and moved there in 1931. They lived in Brewer's yard until they sold the store in 1938 to Arthur Funnell. They then moved to a farm south and west of the store where George Macklin now lives. Mrs. Dickinson passed away 1946 and Joe a year later.

The Dickinsons were a very friendly couple. She was badly incapacitated during their stay at Elmworth, yet she could always see the bright side of life and few realized how very much she suffered.

#### JOHN DONISON

John Donison, 1880-1970 was born in Austria and in 1900 came with his parents to the North West Territories. He filed on a homestead at Rouleau and farmed there until 1910. Now married to Sophia Paliuk, he sold the farm and moved to the Readlyn area where he acquired three quarters on a "pre-emption and purchase" homestead deal. They farmed there until 1927, when the pioneer bug bit again, this time to the wooded lands of the Peace. He settled at Elmworth and also proved up a homestead in the Ravenswood district. In 1949 they retired to live in Regina.

In the family were George, Sebastian, Ambrose, Nicholas, Victoria, Archie, Helen and Colin.

George filed on a homestead in 1928 by proxy, being under the age of 18 and still resides there with his wife, the former Agatha (Peters) Høglund.

Sebastian served with the Signal Corps from 1940 to 1945. He farmed his father's homestead until his death in 1952.

Ambrose farmed and operated a service station at Buffalo Lakes and is now doing mechanical work in the County shops and farms at Valleyview. He married Jean Gummer of Buffalo Lakes.

Nicholas proved up a homestead in this district, left for the B.C. coast in 1939 to work at various occupations there. He is living at Aldergrove, B.C.

Victoria married Orville Willis of Sexsmith who is trainman on the N.A.R. formerly at McLennan and now of Edmonton.

Archie in his youth was a member of an entertainment group that toured the west performing as a magician and musician for a few years, then joined the N.A.R. railway as a trainman. He is living in Grande Prairie.

Helen married Robert Durnie of Vancouver and they make their home in California.

Colin was born at Elmworth and attended school at Ravenswood. He went to Vancouver in 1946 and worked in the Merchant Marine for many years. He is now at Langley, B.C.

The Donison family were musically inclined and their band was in demand during the 30's and 40's for entertainments and dances.

#### THE DUCHARME STORY

Joseph Nazaire Ducharme, better known as Jack, was born in Mawcook, Quebec in the year of 1883. As a young man he came west and worked at a hotel in St. Boniface, Manitoba. From there he came farther west and settled for some years in Lemberg, Saskatchewan where he worked at the Minto Hotel as a bartender. There he married Anne Kornelson and they decided to come farther west to file on land. Anne was born at Balgonie, Saskatchewan. Her mother was of German descent and her father Austrian.

Jack met with Ernie Harding, who had already been to the Peace River country and they landed here in November of 1917 and filed on the S.E. 7-70-11. He spent the winter here and built a shack, living most of the time with Jim Grant and another fellow named Reno. The Christmas of 1917, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Oakford were kind enough to invite all the bachelors in for dinner. In the spring, Jack went back to Saskatchewan and worked there till November, 1918 when he and Anne returned to their homestead and started to clear and break the land. As he had no horses or implements, Jack worked with Franklin Brewer for several years, on the land in the summer and hauling logs for buildings, fence posts and rails and firewood in winter. Under the "Cow Bill", Frank Brewer, Jack Ducharme, John Kerrigan, Gus Miller and Bill Barr decided to go into cattle. They left January 20, 1920 and were gone for almost a month, as it was too cold to ship the cattle. The cattle came by train to Spirit River and were driven on foot from there as the railway tracks were plugged with snow. They were lucky to have Mr. Burrows from Grande





At Ducharmes on Sunday afternoon. Men in back row: Len Williams, Herb Jordan, Jack Ducharme and Jim Grant. 2nd row: Mr. Bordeau, Ed Duteau, Mabel Duteau, Belle Brockie, Rio Grande teacher; Nell Walker, Jo

Grant, Anne Saul, Beaverbrook teacher; Seated: Aldwin and Wes Miller, Bordeau boy, Kathleen, Gerald Jordan, Don and Mrs. Jordan, Helen Walker, Ellen Williams, Anne Ducharme and Marie. 1924.



Mrs. Anne Ducharme's first weasel catch, 1918.

Prairie ahead of them with a bunch of horses to break trail. They not only bought cattle but as they were trustees on the school board, they went to the Normal school and hired a school marm, Miss Edna Small. She taught the first school at Elmworth in the house of Dick Harrington, better known as Diamond Dick.

Mr. and Mrs. Ducharme had a daughter, Rose Marie and a son Maynard Joseph. Rose Marie married Eddie Oakford in 1942 and moved to Prince Edward Island where he was stationed with the Royal Canadian Air Force. They returned home in April, 1943 and when his leave was over he returned to his base and Marie stayed home. They had a daughter, Carol Marie born July 24, 1943. Eddie died December 19, 1944 in a plane crash in Iceland. In 1946 Rose Marie married Allan Lossing, who had returned home from the Canadian Army in 1945. They had a son, Robert Lane and live in Chetwynd, B.C. Carol was married on November 6, 1964 to Frank Day. They had a son Brian Allen and a daughter Sharlene Louise.

Maynard is married to Lorraine Ray, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Ray. They have three children, Deborah Anne, Carey Gladys and Monty Joseph. Maynard and his family live in the Hinton Trail district, on the farm which was homesteaded by Bill Thompson.

Jack Ducharme passed away in 1964 at the age of 81 and is buried in the cemetery at Elmworth. Mrs. Ducharme lives in the Senior Citizens' apartments in Beaverlodge.

#### GEORGE DUMBECK

George Edward Dumbeck, of German and Irish ancestry was born in Minnesota, U.S.A. and came to the Elmworth area in 1910, looking for good land on which to raise cattle. He had law training and was admitted to the bar when he was 18 years old but the challenge of settling new land drew him northward. He returned to his native Minnesota later in 1910, where he met and married a South Dakota girl, Ella Barse. The couple had met at a summer stock theatre for which George had written a play entitled "The Wild Rose". Ella was then an accomplished pianist with classical training and had played for the stage production.

About a year after their marriage, Ella gave birth to a daughter, Imogene. The Dumbecks then journeyed to the Peace River country via the Edson Trail. Their tiny daughter died of pneumonia before they could reach the end of their trip and a doctor.

The Dumbecks first settled in the Huallen area for a short while and later secured a beautiful homestead on the Red Willow river. George and Ella's first two sons, Otis and Eugene were born on the Red Willow homestead. The family also kept a trading post where they did business with other homesteaders nearby and with local Indians.

Later the Dumbeck family returned to South



Dakota where in 1918, their third son, Wilfred (Bill) was born. Two years later the family were back on the Red Willow homestead and son John was born in 1922.

In 1923 they moved to Calgary and in 1926, the fifth son, Alvin Jay was born. George, Ella and family lived there until 1932 but during this time another tragedy occurred and their eldest son Otis, died.

During these early depression years the Dumbeck family once again returned to the Red Willow farm. By 1932, many new families had settled near Elmworth. There were many dances and get-togethers where the Dumbecks combined their musical talents and played for their friends and neighbors. George played the saxophone occasionally and Ella played the piano and violin, while sons Bill and John played the drums and clarinet. Other musicians, including the Donisons and Henry Hatton joined in with the Dumbeck family at the dances.

In 1940, son Bill married Melba Masse from the Slave Lake area. Her parents were pioneers in the Tupper Creek area and originated from Idaho, U.S.A. where she was born. Bill and Melba have four children, William, Brian, Donna and Paula.

John Dumbeck, the fourth son of George and Ella, married a Toronto girl, Betty, in 1945. They have three children, Doreen, Donald and Denise. Eugene, the eldest son, now lives in Beaverlodge.

Alvin passed away suddenly in 1954, George Dumbeck died near Christmas in 1959, and Ella passed away four years later in 1964.

All who knew the Dumbecks remember George for his wit and charm and many are they who took piano lessons from Ella. They will be remembered for their hospitality and friendliness to which they showed all who passed their way.

#### ERNEST FINCH AND FAMILY — by Ferne Finch

Ernest and Florence Finch, with sons George and Jack arrived in the Beaverlodge district in the summer of 1929, from Togo, Saskatchewan, where they had previously farmed. A third son, Walter, had passed away at the age of 12, after a sudden illness. The Depression years were beginning, so the Finch family decided to pioneer in the Peace River country. They stayed, with their household belongings and stock, at a common meeting house on the Halcourt road south of Beaverlodge long enough to file on their homesteads.

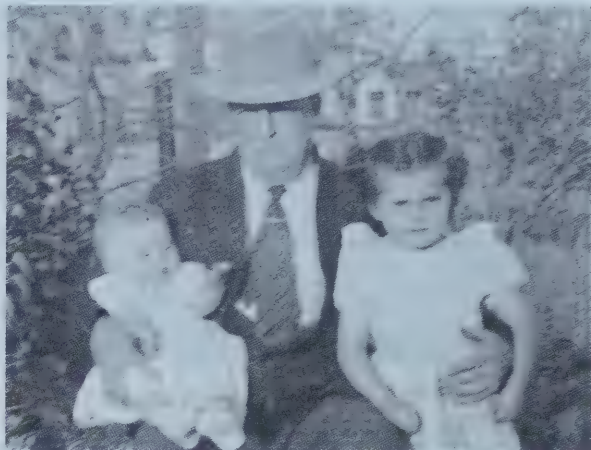
At first the Finch family was undecided about the choice of land and favored sites near Beaverlodge, but eventually each of the three men filed one and one half miles south of the Hazelmere post office and general store. The store manager, Herb Jordan, assisted in building their log house and still points proudly to the firmly moulded corners when we left there 1967.

All went well for several years. Florence Finch was very happy there, busy with her men folk and she had charge of a group of girls at the Anglican Church camp. Later her health began to fail and she passed away in 1938, at the age of 62. Mr. Finch and his boys raised bumper crops on the land they had cleared and hauled grain by team to Beaverlodge, some 26 miles.

There were fine neighbors nearby — the Dagleishs, Speeds, Brushs, Jordans, Smiths, Easts,



Mr. and Mrs. George Finch and sons Walter, George and Jack—1920.



Granddad Finch with George's daughters Georgina and Sandra 1948.



Three old timers "On the bench" Ernest Finch, Alex McTavish and Tom Wilson.



Williams, Smokes, Ducharmes and several bachelors — Tom Wilson, Alex McTavish and others. Mrs. Booth Cook used to tell of an experience she and Mrs. Finch had when they spent the night in the bush, on a berry picking expedition. They were sleeping in a wagon and were frightened by prowling bears.

About 1939 George decided to seek employment in Edmonton, so began several years of work as a carpenter foreman on airport hangars during the early part of World War II — in Edmonton, Calgary, Macleod, Lethbridge and Claresholm. It was in Claresholm that he met and married his school-teacher friend, Ferne Palmer. Incidentally, two days before she met George, Ferne had had her teacup read: the reader saw a George or a Gordon, in her cup, a car accident, a very big change in her life, her pathway northward in the near future, and people coming and going from her parents' home. All of this came true within a few weeks or months — though she didn't give it too much attention at the time.

Ferne and George had met at her parents' home when he and three other workmen came to board and room. They were married April 5 and headed north in the fall of 1941. Their eldest daughter, Kathy was born in Grande Prairie in 1942. Their second daughter, Georgina was born in Claresholm in 1943. Four years later, after George had served two years overseas in the Army, their third daughter, Sandra Rose was born.

George was called to register for service in 1943, after being allowed several postponements due to his airport work. He was sent immediately to Camrose and Calgary, then after only seven months of training, to Aldershot, England. Later he went to France, then back to England. He returned to Claresholm in 1946, where his family were now located. Meanwhile, Jack Finch had been called up for service but released for a physical disability. He went to work on the Alaska Highway for a year or two, so now George was more or less alone on the farm.

In 1950, George and family came to Grande Prairie to live. About this time Jack married Jean Campbell of Grande Prairie and they moved to Fort St. James, B.C., where they still reside. In 1952 the George Finches of Grande Prairie moved out to the Hazelmere-Elmworth area. Dad Finch lived with them and Ferne taught at Elmworth centralized school for 15 years, while George farmed and still did carpentry. In May, 1966, he became ill and spent some time in the Beaverlodge hospital. On his return home sometime during the night, he suffered a sudden heart attack and passed away.

Ernest had pre-deceased him in 1958. So, the old homestead, a lovely clearing, surrounded by thick bush where deer and bear often roamed, was sold and the family moved away. Many neighbors have also moved, having retired or died and so it is more or less isolated once more. When the Monkman pass road is used more frequently, perhaps the Finch farm will once more be valued, since it is only two miles from the Pass road and ten miles from the B.C. boundary.

Ferne and her daughter Sandra are now living in Edmonton. The eldest daughter, Kathy is a trained nurse, working in a research department in

Vancouver. Georgina and her husband live in St. Albert, Alberta.

#### **JAMES EVERETT FRAME**

James Everett Frame, the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Frame received part of his education at Elmworth and finished high school in Grande Prairie. Then he took over and farmed his father's land, S.E. 18-70-11-W6 and later Charles Ward's half, and now lives on the N.E. 7-70-11-W6.

In 1962 he married Louise Ingledew and they have three daughters, Judy, Kathy and Sheri.

Jim, although not a pioneer, has a great interest in the community, helps every year to provide a skating rink for the community and is a very helpful neighbour just as his father was before him.

Jim's mother, Mrs. Ethel Reid lives in the Senior Citizens' Home in Beaverlodge.

#### **ROBERT HUGH FRAME**

Robert Hugh Frame was born at Hardwood Hill, Quebec on December 20, 1891 the youngest child of Mr. and Mrs. William Frame. Bob, as he was best known came west to Manitoba on a harvest excursion and never returned to his birthplace. He worked around McAuley, Manitoba for some time as his only sister Anne was married and lived there. After a time he worked his way further west, joining up with F. T. Brewer, George Wighton and Joe Deschambault. Bob homesteaded the S.E. 20-70-11-W6.

As more settlers arrived to add to the growing community Bob Frame was among the first to work for a post office and school for the new settlement of Elmworth. The kindly young man made everyone his friend. Hardly a homesteader has not been grateful for his neighborly hand with the building of a line fence or an errand done at "Prairie City" or a lonely vigil beside a bed of pain.

Come World War I and his return from service, Bob sold his homestead to Deschambault, electing to build a cabin and live on his Soldier's grant across the road from his neighbour Gus Miller. Sometime about 1930, he bought the Preacher Thompson place along the Diamond Dick creek, north of Jim Grant's homestead and it was here that he lived until his death in January, 1952.

In 1932 Bob was married to Mrs. Ethel Dixon and they had one son, James Everett.

Bob must have driven the first school bus to Hazelmere, with horses. Some of the pupils were Jim Ward, the Connells, Oakfords, Millers and Bernice Brewer. His last contribution to the Elmworth district was land donated for a cemetery in which he is buried.

Bob was a member of B.P.O. Elks and the Canadian Legion.

#### **HENRY GOERTZEN**

Helen and Henry Goertzen lived at Winkler, Manitoba until after their son Herman was born. Somewhere around 1907 they moved to Saskatchewan and farmed rented land for several years. It was here that the 16 younger children of the family were born: two Helens passed away when they were small; Henry Junior, Katy, Helen, George, Bill, Sara, Ann and





George and Billy Goertzen and the mules.

Marie (twins), Etta, Jake, Margaret, Agnes, Susan and Betty. Marie died an infant.

Henry's brother Jake, also came from Winkler to Saskatchewan to Grande Prairie in the fall of 1928 to work. Henry followed shortly afterwards and he and his sons, Henry and George worked in the bush that winter. The next spring they rented George Hagen's land for two years. Jake Goertzen worked at times for Frank Brewer and George Grant.

The first summer they lived in Elmworth they had a huge garden to feed their large family. They had no horses so the garden was dug by hand. They picked blueberries day after day, which they sold for 10c a pound.

Henry's son Herman, with his wife Helen and one girl, Helen came to Elmworth from Saskatchewan in 1930. They then moved to the Wapiti in 1931 and with Henry, Senior and Uncle Jake filed on homesteads. When they lived on the Wapiti many of the children attended school for only two years as the distance was too great.

After spending 45 days in the Grande Prairie hospital following a ruptured appendix operation, Henry the father walked most of the way home behind the wagon as it was too rough for him to ride. This is a far cry from the short hospital stay and transportation home of today.

Uncle Jake moved to Valhalla Centre in 1937 and his brother Henry followed in 1940 and Herman in 1939. George farmed in Hinton Trail for a number of years before moving to Lacombe, where he married Peggy Johnson.

For those of you who might be interested in what

became of this large family — Bill passed away as a youngster September 1936; Helen passed away September 1954, followed by their daughter Helen Lanctot in 1958. Son Henry died in 1967. Henry Senior passed away February 1970. Herman lives with his second daughter Margaret, Mrs. Morris Eady, near LaGlace; Katy, Mrs. Alfred Perdue, lives in Wembley; George had a family of five and still resides in Lacombe; Sara, Mrs. McTavish, lives in Peace River; Ann is with her uncle Jake in Wembley; Etta, Mrs. Gammel, lives in Grande Prairie; Jake Junior served in World War II and has resided at Valhalla Centre since returning; Margaret lives in Regina, Saskatchewan; Agnes, Mrs. Otto Kirscht, lives near Wembley; Susan, Mrs. Ingvar Gustavson, lives in Wembley; Betty, Mrs. Ed Harding, lives in Clairmont.

#### GEORGE GRANT

George Grant, second oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. William Grant, was born August 9, 1877 in Esquering, Halton county where he spent his youth and received his education and as a young man, started west working his way mostly on bridge construction till he reached Alberta.

In the spring of 1917 he came to the Elmworth district. He later bought a quarter from "Shorty" Ward where he farmed till the fall of 1944 when he sold his home quarter to Victor Thiel and his other quarter to Eli Pandachuck.

During the earlier years he farmed in the summer and in his spare time worked on bridge construction to supplement his income.

George never married but was very fond of

children and many children received quarters and dimes to buy candy with. Every Christmas he gave a \$5.00 donation, always anonymously as this was a larger amount than most families could afford and he didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings. He also had the reputation for making the best home-made beer in the district.

In the fall of 1944 he moved to Nelson, B.C. where he resided till the spring of 1947 where he passed away and is buried in the Nelson cemetery.

#### **THE HARRY GRANT STORY — by Elizabeth Grant**

We came to Beaverlodge in 1937 from Laverna, Saskatchewan, arriving September 28 in the pouring rain. I was met at the station by George Sparks who took us to the Frank Polly farm where we stayed until my husband came. Harry followed three days later with the stock cars of cattle and machinery. At the time we had three children, Reginald, Fraser and Elaine.

The first winter we spent in an old house belonging to Ed Sheppard. It was very airy and at times the beds would be covered with snow. Between the fall and spring we built a small house on the Allan Simms quarter where Fraser is now living. The next summer our daughter, Leona was born and six years later we had Gloria.

On July 26, 1951 we had a terrible hail storm which destroyed the crops. Harry and Fraser were in the field when they saw it coming. Fraser ran for home but Harry couldn't make it. He had a large funnel with him so he put it on his head and crawled under the tractor. After the storm was over he removed the funnel but was dripping wet. The next year, on July 26 the hail storm repeated, leaving nothing again.

In 1962 Harry became ill and passed away in 1968. I lived on the farm with my son until 1971. I then moved to Beaverlodge where I have lived for the past three years.

#### **JAMES GRANT**

Theodore James Grant was born in Esqueness, Halton county on May 31, 1879, the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. William Grant. He spent his youth and received his education in Halton county. As a young man he started working for the railroad as a brakeman. He might have lived his whole life in Ontario but for receiving letters from his older brother George telling him of the wonderful Peace River country and coaxing him to come west and get a homestead. In the spring of 1918 he arrived in the Elmworth district. He also, with Frenchy Billedeau, ran a small general store. He later sold his land to Charley Ward and bought S.W. 17-70-11 from Dick Harrington, better known as 'Diamond Dick'. The small creek that runs through this quarter was named the Diamond Dick creek and is still so named. Later he bought the S.E. 47-70-11 from Harry Stanley and farmed the half section till his retirement in the fall of 1945.

Jim dragged the roads for years with four horses and some claim that they were much smoother than they are now. He was also a Justice of the Peace for which he received the sum of 25c for his signature on a legal document.

In 1926 Jim married Mrs. Josephine Miller who had two sons by her first marriage, Wesley John and Aldwin Gustave.

After his marriage, knowing a home is very important to a wife, Jim built the first lumber house south of the Red Willow river. In time the walls were covered with what was known then as Russian plaster and kalsomined. The work was done by Charley Gusnyck and Pete Peterson. What a joy after log walls.

As Jim's two stepsons grew old enough to help with the farm work, Jim and Jo took great pride in their flower and vegetable garden. Jo put up vegetables in sealers for the winter months and gave much away as they always grew much more than they could use.

In the fall of 1945 Mr. and Mrs. Grant turned their farm over to their oldest son, Wesley Miller and moved to Chilliwack to enjoy their leisure years in a warmer climate and also enjoy all the fresh fruit that had never been available in the north. In the spring of 1955 Mr. Grant passed away after a short illness and he is buried in the Elmworth cemetery.

After her husband's death, Jo decided to come north again, so her son Wesley bought a small house and placed it on the farm where she had spent so many years. Jo lived there until she was no longer able to live alone. Then she moved to Central Park Lodge and lived there till her death in September 1971. She is buried in the Elmworth cemetery.

Jo was a very hard faithful worker for the Ladies' Aid of the United Church and made hundreds of aprons, pot holders, etc. for their bazaars. She could always be depended on for very fine baking for fall suppers — especially bread, rolls and pies. She was a wonderful cook.

Wesley has recently sold his farm and retired in Beaverlodge.



Sandy, George and Jim Grant.



## DOUGLAS AND ELLEN HADDOCH

Douglas and Ellen Haddoch and his brother Ken came from England to homestead at Elmworth. The men farmed a half-section south of Bert McKone. They lived there until 1930 when they sold out to Frank Macklin.

Mrs. Haddoch was the first teacher at Craigellachie which opened January, 1923. Her infant daughter, Violet was cared for by Mrs. Levitt while the mother taught. Pioneer life on the homestead didn't appeal to Mrs. Haddoch so she and Violet returned to England. After that neither brother stayed long at Elmworth.

Ken is married and lives in Edmonton. It is thought that Doug returned to England.

## THE ERNEST HARDING STORY — by Ethel Harding

Ernest Harding was born in Cavalier, North Dakota in 1893 and in 1905, he moved with his parents to Nokomis, Saskatchewan. Being from a large family, 13 in all, he left home at an early age. In 1915 he moved to the Peace River country and filed on a homestead. He joined the Army in the fall of 1917. After the war, he came back to Elmworth and worked for W. J. Oakford the rest of that summer and part of the winter. He borrowed a team of oxen from Mr. Oakford to haul logs and fence posts, so he could start building and fencing. He built a small bachelor's shack, and in 1921 he married Ethel Hartnell. He took a Soldier's Grant and bought six horses and six cows. In the winter, he and his bachelor friends spent most of the days in the bush cutting logs and fence posts. During

the summer they erected barns, hog houses, and fenced their land. In 1923 he built a new log house and that's where we raised our family of nine. The family consisted of six girls and three boys.

Dorothy married Sam Miller; Mary, Gerald Jordan; Jean, James McArthur; Doris married Don Jordan; Faye, Ronald Dupuis; Merle, Donna Ray, Bob, Evelyn Tollefsrud; and Alvin, Linda Schweitzer. Edna passed away in 1951. We have ten grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. All got their education at the Elmworth school.

We cleared and broke our first quarter by hand, cutting around the willow crowns and pulling them out with a team. At night we would pile and burn brush till dark. The first breaking was done by four oxen. Water was hauled from the Red Willow river for our livestock and drinking purposes. In later years they drilled a well by hand. In 1955-56 we built a modern home. Our first tractor was an old cross-mounted Case, which back-fired and kicked like Hell when we tried to start it. We purchased our first car, a Model A Ford, in 1928 and it was still in good running order when sold in 1954.

We were very fortunate to have good neighbors. They were always willing and ready to lend a helping hand. Ernest passed away in 1964 at the age of 71 years, after a lengthy illness. Ethel still resides on the home quarter at Elmworth. The rest of the family live in the surrounding district.

In 1952 attention focused on the Harding place when the first oil well of the district was spudded in and drilling continued for almost a year. The results of the drilling are unknown but rentals etc., built a fine new home for the Hardings.

The Ernie Harding farm.





Ethel and Ernie Harding and five daughters.



Ernie Harding, Fred Hartnell, (?), Alex Thompson.

## CLARENCE HARTNELL

Clarence Hartnell was born in 1860 and married Lena Hartnell (no relation) in the U.S.A. and their family of four boys, Harvey, Ray, Fred and Jesse and two girls, Mabel and Ethel were born there. True pioneers, they moved from Oregon to Creston, B.C. by wagon caravan. Later they moved to Leduc, this time by train and then on to Wetaskiwin.

In 1914 Clarence and another man drove with team and wagon as far as the Smoky River. Here they located their outfit on a barge for Grande Prairie. He filed for himself and his sons by proxy in the Elmworth district.

Mrs. Hartnell passed away in 1915 and never saw

the Peace country. In 1917 Clarence returned with his family.

In 1921 Ethel married Ernest Harding of Nokomis, Saskatchewan and that same year Harvey passed away. Fred and Jesse freighted for Frank Donald in Grande Prairie for a couple of years. Ray remained a bachelor and spent his last few years in Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie.

The Hartnells were the first in the district to own a tractor, a Waterloo Boy, a threshing outfit and a saw-mill.

Mr. Hartnell passed away in 1944 and Jesse and his family stayed on the old place. Jesse's son Larry now farms it; Jim and family are at Wonowon, B.C. and daughter Irene (Mrs. Wilfred Hommy) lives nearby.

## FRED HARTNELL

Fred Hartnell, the son of Clarence Hartnell married Marie Schaifer of Edmonton in 1928 and they lived on their bush homestead west of Elmworth. Fred was a mechanic and worked out most of the time until they moved to Dawson Creek in 1943 with their family of five. Another girl was born there.

Fred passed away in 1967. Marie is still in Dawson Creek. Ken, Shirley, and Sheila live in Kamloops. Cecil, Doug and Frances and families live in Dawson Creek.

## THE HARTNELL STORY — by Edna Moyer

The fascinating story of Carmel Gowan, probably the only world famous personage whose roots go back to Elmworth's log cabin days, deserves a place in this book of memories.

Carmel's great grandfather, Clarence Hartnell was a sprightly, jolly old man who carried his dancing slippers to the local dances and used them even when in his eighties.

The Hartnell family consisted of Mabel, Mrs. Chisholm and later Mrs. Lewis Young, Carmel's grandmother; Ethel, Mrs. Ernest Harding and four sons — Jesse, Fred, Harvey and Ray. The boys were known as expert mechanics and had the first wood-sawing outfit in Elmworth. The neighbours appreciated Ray's kindness and his subtle humor expressed always in slow soft-spoken tones.

The Chisholm family included Gladys, Carmel's mother; Pearl, now Mrs. William Lawrie of Burnaby; Harry of Montana; Helen, Mrs. Julius Bancosco and years later her sons, Dennis and Darryl and daughters Faye, and May, the youngest is Mrs. Hayden of Kamloops. Other family members are Charles, Louis and Frances Young, half brothers and sister of the Chisholms. With Gladys and Pearl the link of our friendship has never been broken. Gladys had started training in the Swift Current hospital when handsome, ambitious Nelson Gowan was brought in with a broken leg. Romance, marriage and a happy, busy life on the combined farm and ranch operation replaced the career in nursing.

Their family of five, Joe, Juanita, Howard, Carmel and Shirley were unusually talented musically and in rope twirling. For some years they led colorful parades in Toronto, Chicago and other American cities, the boys in the lead on horseback, playing

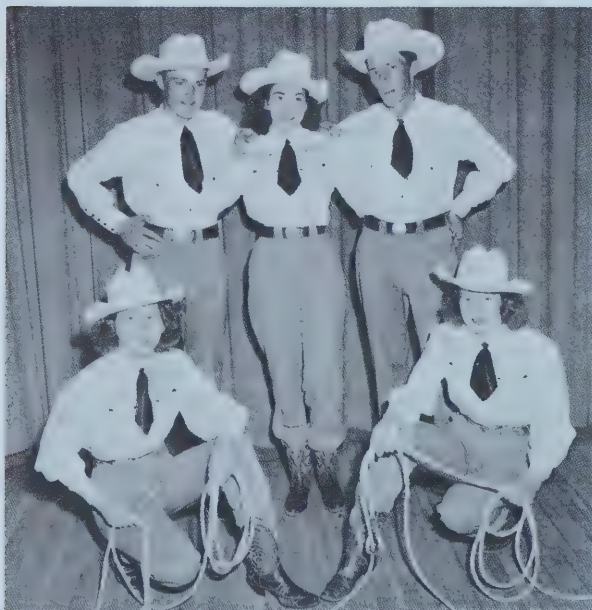


musical instruments and the girls following doing rope tricks.

Since their father's death, the boys and their wives and families have run the home farms. Juanita and Shirley married but Carmel continued her roping career to world fame. She has toured Europe



Carmel Gowan in her rope twirling act.



The Gowan family: Joseph, Juanita, Howard. Front—Carmel, Shirley.

numerous times, Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and South America several times, one year with Gene Autrey. She has taken part in many U.S. top rodeo and sport shows and has been featured in the world's top entertainment centres from Moulin Rouge in Paris to the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh and for three years in the Grandstand show at the Calgary Stampede.

Several years ago Carmel adopted a Korean orphan, Kim who tours with her.

It's a happy occasion when Carmel and Kim make their all too in-frequent visits home where Kim is very happy at her grandma's Cypress Hills cottage or on the farm with her new cousins.

#### HANS HOGLUND

I came from Broadview, Saskatchewan with another party in June 1928. From Edmonton we had to ship our Model A car to McLennan as the roads were so bad. We drove on to Grande Prairie and camped by the creek near the bridge. Dorcas and Jessie Macklin stopped to talk and told us there were lots of homesteads at Elmworth. We went on to Fort St. John but didn't stay because there was no water.

We came back and set out for Elmworth. We stopped at Roy Macklin's and he spent a day showing us the land. Lou Young then took us along the Wapiti and I filed on my present land. The bush here at the time was only up to the stirrups.

My partners returned to Saskatchewan and I worked in Grande Prairie. In the fall brothers Charlie and Helgard came and we went back to the homestead and built a cabin. We bought our first cow from Frank Brewer. The first cookstove came from the Bell Fleming Hardware in Grande Prairie and is still used by Charlie.

In the bush were large black animals. We soon found they were moose and were good eating.

School was held in my house before the Ravenswood school was built. Also dances were held there. It was at the first dance in the new Ravenswood school that I met my wife Stella in 1937.

Our family Raymond, Helmer, Allan and Diane are married. Donald, the youngest, is still at home.

#### JOHN HOGLUND

John and Mrs. Hoglund came in 1929 with the rest of the family and lived with sons Hans, Charlie and Hilgard until their house was built on adjoining land. Violet the youngest was born here. Evelyn and Caroline soon left to work and got married. Hilgard and Everett married sisters. They are now deceased. Gothard married Elsie Baker and lives in B.C. Clara passed away. The twins Leonard and Clifford, Edith, Helen, and Violet all married. Charlie, a bachelor still lives at Ravenswood.

John passed away in 1940 and Mrs. Hoglund stayed on with the family that were still on the land. She climbed that Wapiti hill to fish until the last. She passed away in 1966 at the age of 84.

#### HARRY HOWATT

Harry Howatt came in 1929 accompanied by his father and his brothers Bob and Cliff. They were followed a couple of months later by his other brothers Will and Percy.

Harry met Emily Smith in Vancouver while on a visit there. They were married in 1936. He bought land from Chittick and from Bancesco and farmed with a sizable herd of cattle and quite a large number of pigs.

They sold in 1973 and live in Vancouver.

#### **PERCY HOWATT — by Tillie Howatt**

Percy and I were married in 1924 in Prince George, B.C. He owned a pool room just a few miles away at Shelly. Our two daughters were born there and we lived there till the depression years hit. Money was very hard to get; even when working there were no funds. At that time everyone was talking about going up to the Peace River to take up a homestead so Percy decided he too was going.

He and his brothers left to see what luck they would have in locating a homestead. They got as far as Sexsmith, hired an old car and drove out as far as Elmworth. At that time the railroad went only as far as Wembley. They each filed on a homestead adjoining one another in the Elmworth district.

The next year, 1929 Percy went up and got out logs and put up the walls of our log house. In 1930 we sold the pool room and house and took what money we could get for it and moved to Elmworth. One of our first tasks there was to finish putting on the roof and windows in the log house.

Our homesteading days began. There was no money to speak of and no jobs available. But Percy worked for different farmers and traded work for whatever he could get. He bought his first horse at Halcourt. Then he worked for calves, chickens, pigs and feed. In the meantime our girls were growing up and had to go to school. Elmworth was 4½ miles and they had no way of getting there. A man whom we knew heard that we were looking for a school pony. He brought over an Indian pony and we made a trade. We had it a week when it got away and we didn't find it for months.

We thought about the Indians coming out for July 1st sports at Rio Grande and that we might get another pony from them. Percy rode over there before sports day as the Indians always camped there a few days earlier. He came home and said he could trade a suit of clothes for another pony. We had one that was nearly new but I had taken the lining out of the coat, for lining for something else. So Percy said, "Well, I guess we're out of luck."

I worked all the next day taking the lining out of another suit coat and putting it into this one. But as one was a straight fit and the other was a form fit, the lining didn't fit too well. However I finished and Percy rode back to Rio Grande with the suit. When the Indian tried on the suit, I understand it didn't fit too well but he traded us a nice little grey pony for it and a nice pink dress. We called that pony "June". A neighbour broke her for us. That fall the girls started school at Elmworth on their little grey pony.

Times continued being very hard. Percy cleared land by hand and broke it with machinery that he borrowed from his brother.

By this time we needed a school in our district as there were more children in our area. So the men all got together, got out logs and built a school and shelter for the horses. That school was called "Haven". The

men donated their time. Our girls then changed from Elmworth to Haven.

Times were still very tough. We always grew a big garden, and even gave vegetables to the ones that didn't have any. By this time we had more land cleared and had more cattle. So I took up a homestead which cornered our homestead, which I proved up with cattle and this was our pasture.

One day when I was at the store the storekeeper asked me if I would consider making some jackets for him out of moose hides as he had bought the hides from the Indians. So I thought, why not? I had never done this kind of work before but I would give it a try. This would really help us out. I started making these moose hide jackets, fringes and all. I continued for three years. It helped us to buy the things we really needed.

Then after a few years of school at Haven the girls had to go back to Elmworth to finish the last year of school. That fall, Bernice the oldest daughter, left to go to Edmonton and Opal stayed home one more year. Then our third daughter, Diane was born in 1944 and in December of that year Opal left for Edmonton to take hairdressing training.

As Diane grew up and was ready for school, she too started school at Haven and rode the same little pony her sisters had ridden all those years. Then one cold April morning when she had been tied to a tree in the schoolyard a big storm came up and she went around and around that tree with just the rope around her neck, and slipped on the ice and hung herself. It was a sad day for all the kids at school.

As the years went by we bought another quarter of land. Now there were tractors and bulldozers for clearing your land.

By this time our youngest daughter, Diane had grown up and had gone to Calgary to take her nurse's training. When she finished she came back to Grande Prairie to work in the hospital. The following year she married Tom Quinn of Beaverlodge. They have two children and now live in Beaverlodge.

Bernice married Robert Tucker and Opal, Richard Woodsworth. The former haven't any children but the Woodsworths had five. They have two grandchildren, Tillie and Percy's great grandchildren. The Woodsworths also live in Calgary.

The three girls now say they wouldn't have missed that life on the homestead for anything as they have great memories of the old log house and the fun they had while they were home.

#### **ROBERT AND MARTHA HOWATT**

When Bob Howatt came looking for a homestead in 1928 he found the trees too big in the Little Smoky country. Land was rapidly being taken up. In 1929 he found good land two miles south of Elmworth. The brush cover was light then but before he had most of his land broken the trees had grown so that clearing was a job for heavy machinery.

Temporary cabins were built the first year, as so many other homesteaders were doing at that time. Then it was back to sawmill work near Prince George for the winter.

Brother Percy came with him in 1930 to help build



houses and barns on each others land and to get on with the job of proving up.

In 1935 he and Martha Graf were married. In those lean years card parties were organized for diversion during the winter and dances in the Elmworth school at 25¢ a couple lent levity to the times.

In recent years both Martha and Bob have spent many winters as cook and bull cook at sawmill camps on the Monkman Pass road and at Fort McMurray often cooking for 50 or 60 men. They also worked at Grande Cache during construction by the A.R.R. At this camp mostly Portuguese were employed and life there was not boisterous as the men were out to make a "stake" and not given to spending money in town on week ends.

In the meantime the homestead buildings had deteriorated so with new money from winter work they built a modern house at the corner near the main road.

Son Ron married Ivy House and lives beside his folks. Delbert married Anneke Avery; Terry married Janice Webber and is a meat cutter in Fort St. John; Raymond married Merwa Stagg.

#### THE WILL HOWATT FAMILY

Will Howatt originally came from North Bay, Ontario and is a Veteran of World War I.

For some time he worked on a 2000 acre grain farm near Warner in southern Alberta. There were 110 horses in the barn at one time; steam tractors were used for threshing and for some of the heavy work.

He came to Mayerthorpe where his father had a homestead. For some years he was engaged in the construction of a number of grain elevators and a trestle

bridge. While there he met an uncle of Rusty and Steve Johnston who suggested he find his nephews at Elmworth. Burgess Longson helped him in locating a homestead.

In 1928 he found land south of Johnstons and south of his brother Bob. Another brother, Percy was south of him, all in a row. After erecting some temporary buildings he returned to Mayerthorpe until he came to stay in 1929.

His first wife Emily died in 1929. In 1934 he married Edna Sterr.

Mixed farming has been the family standby through good and lean years.

The family consists of five sons and three daughters: Randall, Lawrence, Harry, Don and Blair, Verna, Laura and Ivy. All are married.

#### ED JOHNSON

Ed Johnson homesteaded the land where the Elmworth post office and church now stand. He served on the school board for a time and also drove the mail. He sold his land to Frank Brewer and moved to the coast.

#### JOHN KERRIGAN

John came about 1915 from Fort Steele, B.C. where he at one time had a saddlery and harness shop.

He filed on land in the Beaverbrook School district now owned by Aldwin Miller.

John was a very friendly man with a lot of Irish wit. He could tell many tales of his work and travels. People often spoke of the good bread he baked.

He took great pride in his herd of cattle. In his time it was mostly "open range." He farmed with horses.



A root harrow in action. Twice over with this implement leaves most of the scrub roots loose on top of the ground.



Euphemia McNaught: Pioneer Threshing Outfit.  
Courtesy — Elementary School, Beaverlodge





Robert Guest: Indian Graves, Kakwa River.  
Courtesy — Edmonton Art Gallery



Marjorie Hunkin: Homesteader's Cabin.  
Courtesy — E. C. Stacey





Euphemia McNaught: Trail Ride, Monkman Pass.  
 Courtesy — Lynn Holroyd



Euphemia McNaught: Trees; McNaught's Lake.  
 Courtesy — N. D. McFarlane



Robert Guest: View In High Country.  
Courtesy — George Schultz



Robert Guest: Spot Fire Starting.  
Courtesy — Norman Rodseth

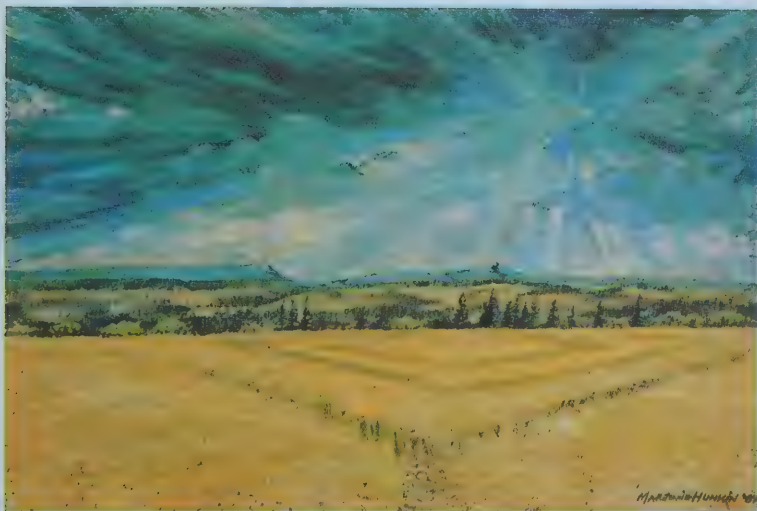




Robert Guest: Forest Fire at Night.  
Courtesy — Gordon Blackmore



Robert Guest: River Boat on the Wapiti.  
Courtesy — Elementary School Beaverlodge



Marjorie Hunkin: Beaverlodge Valley.  
 Courtesy — Elementary School, Beaverlodge.



Euphemia McNaught: Allison's Mill.  
 Courtesy — E. C. Stacey





Euphemia McNaught: Entrance to the Monkman Pass.  
Courtesy — Euphemia McNaught

## MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM LEVETT

William and Emily Levett and their daughter, Elsie, about three years old came to the Elmworth district in 1919. He built a log house on his land and after a short stay they returned to Edmonton for a few years where Bill had work. When they returned to their homestead, Bill farmed in the summer and worked out during the winter months. Mrs. Levett and Elsie remained on the homestead and Elsie went to school at Elmworth. After a few years of farming Bill became ill with the flu and passed away. Mrs. Levett and Elsie stayed on the farm for a while, then moved to Gordondale where she found work and after a few years she married Ed Johnson of Gordondale.

Elsie Levett married Ralph Hagan and they lived on the Levett homestead until Ralph enlisted in World War II. Then Elsie and her little son Eric lived with Mrs. Johnson. Ralph and Elsie sold the Levett quarter to Seymour Smoke and after Ralph returned from overseas they continued to live at Gordondale. They had two children, Eric and Marie. Ralph and Elsie now live in Chetwynd where Ralph has worked for years with the Canfor lumber mill.

Marie Hagan married Cyril Day of Gordondale and are farming. They have two little girls.

Eric took a course in mechanics in Dawson Creek and works away from home.

## THE ROY MACKLIN FAMILY

The Roy Macklin family moved into the Elmworth district in the summer of 1927. The decision and effort entailed must have required great determination and hope for this courageous man and his loyal wife who were no longer young and had a family of ten, ranging in ages from two to twenty. There was determination to carve a home and a future out of this fertile virgin wilderness and a hope that here they might again establish lasting roots. The fact that this chronicle appears bears out the success of their endeavour.

Roy and Annabelle were not entirely new to the area, having just spent five years at Grande Prairie operating a dairy farm. Roy Macklin had been preceded there by his brother I. V. Macklin, who had already established a dairy farm and was most enthusiastic about the prospects of the Peace River country.

The seven years before coming to Grande Prairie had been most disillusioning. The Macklins had been raised along the shores of Lake Ontario. Their respective families were prosperous and established with ancestors dating back in the area for 200 years. It must have been a resurgence of the pioneer spirit or the then current "Lure of the West" which caused this determined man to uproot his young family and move them west to Alberta. They first settled near Vermilion, but with one crop failure after another for seven years, another move seemed imperative. Mrs. Macklin would have chosen to return east for her genteel up-bringing and reserved nature little fitted her for the rigours of pioneering, but move they did. On to Grande Prairie — 1922!

The few years spent there assured them that here was a productive area with a future in which they wished to participate. Roy purchased a half section at

Elmworth on the Red Willow river and prepared for the journey.

The 40 mile trip was made in a cavalcade of horse-drawn vehicles, machinery, wagons with equipment and animals, hayracks with household goods and crated poultry. The mother and children rode on the piles of hay with the younger ones snuggled down among the bedding and prepared to enjoy the adventure. Bringing up the rear of the cavalcade were the cattle and horses driven by Indian cowboys hired to assist with the move.

Several overnight camps were made. The horses were hobbled and grazed, the cows milked and pastured, the hogs and poultry fed. The meals were prepared over open fires and beds made on the hay. A typical pioneer experience!

The first few days at Elmworth were spent with the Frank Brewers, an outstanding, hospitable family already there. This enabled the family to put up a "temporary dwelling" which was to be added to several times in the future and served as home for 20 years.

The summer of '27 saw the Macklins settled in, the land being cleared and winter shelters prepared for the animals. The farm had a beautiful location, with rolling hills and the river and creek nearby. Water for cooking and washing was hauled in barrels from the river and ice was cut in winter and stored for summer use. The wild fruit abounded and there was plenty of game and fish. The family were happy and soon felt part of the school and community life.

The brightness of the future was somewhat affected by the onslaught of the depression. The "Dirty Thirties" saw the Macklins poor, but proud and struggling. They did use these economically unproductive years, however, to acquire and clear larger holdings of land, including several homesteads. It was on one of these that the permanent home was built and the family moved to in 1946.

By this time the younger Macklins had grown up — the daughters had married and scattered, but the sons Frank, George and Tom remained to continue the farming which their father had started.

These are the members of the Macklin family: Oral and Neil died when they were young. Clara who married Claude Bell and lived in Vancouver has died. Dorcas is married to Allen Dalgleish who farmed at Hazelmere and they are now retired to Kelowna. Jessie married Joe Bird of Oregon. Ruby is Mrs. Louis O'Rourke of Hazelmere. Frank lives at Elmworth. George married Elaine Grant of Elmworth. Bertha is Mrs. Jack Esler of Victoria, B.C. Tom married Margaret Miller of Elmworth.

The Macklins never regretted their final choice of home in the Elmworth district. They loved their community with its independent neighbors, they loved their local church and the beauty of the country side. In 1964 they proudly celebrated their Diamond Wedding anniversary with many friends and family in attendance. Mrs. Macklin lived for another year, while Mr. Macklin survived a further five. They lie buried side by side in the Grande Prairie cemetery.

The Macklins were true pioneers, possessed of in-



dustry, hope and courage and an undying faith in the future of the Peace River country which they loved.

### ALDWIN MILLER

Gus and Josephine Miller came to this country in 1919, when I was a small boy. Dad homesteaded on a quarter section of land in the Elmworth district where Alex Pandachuck now resides. We lived in a log shack with just dirt for a floor, on the Reno place, which now belongs to Ed Miller. We stayed there until dad had a house built on the homestead.

The first school I attended was about three miles away. It was called the Diamond Dick school. The children came from a few miles around and either rode horseback or walked as I did. We had no surveyed roads, only trails that went across country.

My first teacher was Miss Small, now Mrs. Edna Moyer. The schools in those days were built from logs and were just one room deals. I finished up my schooling at Elmworth log school which was the site for the present school.

In 1936 I married Doris Smoke and in 1940 we moved on to NE 12-70-12. It had belonged to John Kerrigan.

We have three children, Aldwin of Whitehorse, Irene of Fort St. John, B.C. and Ken who is unmarried and lives at home part-time. Ken has a half section in the Hazelmere district.

### EDWARD AND MARGARET MILLER

Edward and Margaret Miller were born, grew up and in 1917 were married at Thurso, Scotland. He was born in 1890 and she in 1893.

Ed, better known in Elmworth as "Scotty" came to Canada in 1912 to Darlingford, Manitoba, then a year later to Swift Current. When war was declared, he enlisted at Winnipeg and was sent overseas the following August with the Fourth Brigade of the 19th Battalion. It was 1919 that he came home to Canada and west to Calgary after "serving his share of time in the mud."

Ed planned to take a homestead and a soldier's grant so he joined the returned men who were headed for the Peace River country. He reached Grande Prairie in April 1919 by train. After looking over the country east of the Smoky River and finding nothing to suit him he went west and south of the Red Willow and located at NE 9-70-11. In Grande Prairie he outfitted himself with a team, wagon, walking plow, tent and grubstake. The first year Scotty built a cabin, a small barn and broke a few acres. Now he was a homesteader.

On September 11, 1920 Mrs. Miller, her 23-month old baby, Bessie and her brother, George Watt, a veteran, arrived from Thurso. The trip had taken 10 days by boat, a week by train to Edmonton and nearly 3 days to Grande Prairie and then the drive to the homestead.

Scotty had finally settled on SE 16-70-10-6 in the centre of the school district so he gave land for a school. The men got out a set of logs and as it was a very mild winter they were able to complete the first Elmworth school just before Christmas, 1921. The school board consisted of Frank Brewer, Jack Ducharme and Clyde



The Ed Miller family, Christie (L) Isabel, Mother, Margaret, Dad, Bessie (R). Eddie (Front).



Margaret and Ed Miller's 50th. wedding anniversary, 1967.

Campbell. The first teacher was Edna Small, now Mrs. Gordon Moyer. Earlier the school had opened in 1920 when Miss Small taught in the Diamond Dick cabin until the new one was ready. As the pupil numbers increased a second room was added. Ed served 16 years on the school board.

The Millers built a new home in 1927-28 to accommodate the growing family. Mrs. Miller didn't get out the logs but she made her home a welcome place for many people. Her husband and family were her first





A Sunday gathering at Ed Millers.

concern, then the community. She was an active member and worker in the Women's Institute, the Ladies' Aid and the U.F.W.A. Too, coming as a professional dressmaker she did a great deal of sewing for people other than her family. Then her knitting was in demand whether for soldiers, bachelors or her home folk. She still does beautiful crocheting. Cream, butter and eggs were exchanged at the store for grocery supplies. Bachelors and other friends were made most welcome.

There were six children. Edward farms the home place where the Millers live, as well as his own land. Bessie married Orvil Hamilton, a farmer at Rimbey. Their family has three girls and three boys. Chrissie is Mrs. George Gallimore of Edmonton. George is with the Angus Company. There are three boys. Isabel and Art Cleese, the postmaster at Beaverlodge, have two boys, George and Dennis. Margaret married Tom Macklin who farms at Elmworth. They have two children, Tim and Dorothy, married to Cecil Ray, their son is Jason. Tim Macklin, the son is a student at Elmworth. Easter is married to Thomas Styan (Lucky), a diesel mechanic at Whitehorse and they have two boys and one girl.

On August 22, 1967 the Millers celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. In 1974 it will be the 57th, Scotty is 84 and Margaret 80. There are the 6 children living, 16 grandchildren and one great-grandson.

The Beaverlodge Branch of the Legion No. 121, in 1972 saluted Scotty a life member, by acknowledging the record of his military service.

Not every year brought a bumper crop. Often harvesting saw a late fall. Sometimes, as in 1933 the crops were hailed, sometimes frozen, 1973-74 tells the tale of a poor fall, hard winter and a difficult spring.

In the early years everyone helped each other whether it was getting out a set of logs or participation in the Beef Ring with headquarters at Tom Quinns or putting up ice in the winter. The community developed barb wire telephones, now modernized and operated by A.G.T., gravelled roads and modern homes. Too there is a community church, a hall, a curling rink under construction and a central school with an auditorium. The hamlet also has a post office and a good general store. The Millers are proud to have been able to help build this community. Scotty pays tribute to the friends and neighbors who helped in anyway to develop the community.

As Scotty said, "If I were to write all the happiness that we have seen here it would be a book by itself!"

## GUSTAVE MILLER

Gustave Albert Miller was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin, U.S.A. in 1884 the only son of Mr. and Mrs. John Miller. Gus received his education in La Crosse and worked as a bartender. In 1908 he married Josephine Waska who had come from Poland to La Crosse. They had two sons, Westley John and Aldwin Gustave born there.

In 1917 they moved to Saskatchewan and worked for a short time as farm helper, later moving to Edmonton where Gus drove a dray team. Hearing of the good land around Grande Prairie they decided to move up here and landed in the Elmworth district in the spring of 1919, filing on the land now farmed and owned by Alex Pandachuk.

Shortly after Gus arrived he received help from the "Cow Bill" when F. T. Brewer and Jack Ducharme brought the 50 head of cattle in from Edmonton. Gus received his 10 head.

As there were no fences and cows would roam at will, it kept Wes and Aldwin busy rounding up the cattle for milking time.

Mrs. Miller, being a very good cook helped out by baking and selling bread to bachelors Bob Frame, Jim and George Grant, Billy Cargill also supplied these bachelors with butter and traded the surplus at the local store for groceries.

Gus worked on the farm clearing etc. and in the winter at a saw mill in Buffalo Lakes.

In 1924 Gus returned to La Crosse where he later passed away and is buried there.

## WESTLEY JOHN MILLER

Westley John Miller came to the Elmworth district in 1919, the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Gus Miller. He received his education in Beaverbrook and Elmworth schools. He worked for his stepfather Jim Grant, also worked on numerous other farms in the district. In 1934 he married Hazel L. Frame, the niece of Bob Frame who came to visit her uncle in 1932 from the province of Quebec. Wes and Hazel farmed for three years on rented land, then in 1940 Wes bought a grain truck and hauled grain, livestock, etc. until 1945. When his stepfather Jim Grant decided to retire he turned the half section over to Wes and Hazel. They bought a quarter that had belonged to Les Longson and farmed till the fall of 1973 when they sold to Clifford Neighbor. After their auction sale in April 1974 they bought a home in Beaverlodge and retired.

Wes and Hazel had two children, Lila Josephine and Clayton Edison — both born in the Grande Prairie Hospital. Both went to school in Elmworth. Lila went to Richmond, Quebec to business college and still works as a secretary though married to Willard McIsaac and has two sons, Benjamin and Robert; Clayton who worked in the oil patch for many years is married and has two children, Mary Lynne and Curtis. Clayton and Carole also have a mobile home park in Whitecourt.

## GORDON S. MOYER — by Isabel Campbell

"I was fresh from Waterloo County, Ontario, that fall of 1915, and as a green hand was helping thresh the big Saskatchewan crop when I met a homesteader from the Peace River country.



"It's different from the plains", he told me. "It's a rolling, park-like land of running streams, trees aplenty for building and fuel and pasture grass three feet high for livestock!"

"Threshing completed, the homesteader had won three converts. An Irish lad, 18, just over from the Old Country, a seasoned Scotch-Canadian of 45 and myself just turned 21, headed into the newly surveyed wilderness of the Northwest that December. The railroad under construction was then about half way between Edmonton and Grande Prairie. We rode the construction train as far as the Big Smoky, slung our packs and rifles over our backs and struck out on foot, making 40 miles a day after we got trail-toughened.

"Snow, youth and inexperience didn't augur well for locating the best claims but we chose land close together. Mine was a piece of untouched wilderness. Our Scot-Canadian friend who had picked up an amazing fund of useful knowledge knocking about the States and Canada, showed Irish and me how to throw up a cabin with only a saw and axe. After he got a sour dough bucket going and taught us to make crisp bannock and flapjacks we knew we were well along as homesteaders."

Young Moyer registered December 21, 1915 on the NE 15-70-11-W6 and George Grant, his older friend the SE 22-70-11-W6.

The next spring, his first breaking duties completed with oxen, he became intrigued by the experimental activities of W. D. Albright and hired himself out to the pioneer agriculturist. That spring of 1916 he broke sod for the first small experimental plot. Working and seeding that plot with the Albright oxen four-up proved the beginning of 37 years unwavering scientific interest in grain-producing possibilities of the Peace River country. Intermittently for some seven years as his homestead duties allowed, he toiled at the Beaverlodge Experimental Sub-station under Superintendent Albright, learning, experimenting, observing, until his own growing farm demanded his full time.

In 1927 he began growing Victory oats, gaining honors by twice winning the Better Farming Competition sponsored by the Beaverlodge Board of Trade in cooperation with the Alberta Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Service Board. In 1949 he entered oat samples in the Toronto Royal and came off with second award.

But that year of 1949 brought an honor of greater merit to Gordon Moyer when the Canadian Seed Growers' Association conferred on him its highest award and greatest single honor which can come to a Canadian seed grower — the Robertson Associate award.

In 1951, the Elmworth farmer whose expert knowledge, long patience and faith in the land focused attention of the entire grain-producing world on the Peace River country, received recognition for more than three decades contribution to successful seed growing practices. He was given the international title of World Oats Champion. Later he was awarded the 1953 Toronto Royal Alsike Championship.

Mr. Moyer was also identified with major agricultural organizations. For many years he was

secretary of Elmworth FUA and in 1952 was named secretary of the Alberta Federation of Agriculture Farmers' Committee beside serving on the Grande Prairie County Fair Board and the County Agricultural Service Board. Throughout the years every organization and community project knew his leadership and he was especially active in the work of the United Church.

His community and the entire Peace River country were stunned when death took one of its most outstanding leaders May 23, 1953 at the age of 58, survived by his widow, son Gordon Jr., a graduate of Grande Prairie High school and daughter Alice, a grade 9 student.

The Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune editorially expressed the country's shock:

"In the sudden passing of Gordon S. Moyer the Peace River country has lost one of its staunchest boosters and one of its top farmers.



Gordon Moyer's strawberry and ice cream party, 1928.



Sid Watson's log cabin, built in 1920 by Sid and Gordon Moyer.



Gordon Moyer, World Oat King, 1951, with Edna Moyer, Gordon Jr. and Alice.





Gordon Moyer opening a Christmas box from home, 1916, with Eileen and Bruce Albright.

"Over the years Mr. Moyer by his own farming skill made a large contribution to Peace River agriculture. His victories at national and international grain shows brought a great deal of publicity to this northern district, demonstrating to the world the productive capacity of 'The Peace'.

"Perhaps the apex of Mr. Moyer's career was reached in 1951 when he won the world oat crown. But the measure of his farming success cannot be measured alone by the laurels he won in international competition against the world's best.

"He had an abiding interest in the up-lifting of Peace River agriculture as a whole and by example and contribution, played a large part in the development of the basic industry of 'The Peace'.

"The keen interest he had taken in junior farm organizations in this area was an inspiration to many a farm boy and girl.

"In his passing the Peace River country has lost a fine citizen."

## OAKFORD PIONEER STORY

One of the oldest pioneer families in the district south of the Red Willow was the William Oakford family. They and their girls arrived on their homestead on March 3, 1915. They were accompanied by the Ed Duteaus who after staying with Oakfords for a while, filed on a homestead in the Rio Grande district.

Oakfords had not been in Elmworth district very

long when they decided to open a little general store. This was a good thing for the district as most of the settlers did not have any way of hauling groceries from Beaverlodge.

At first Bill hauled his supplies from Grande Prairie with a team of oxen. Most of the rivers and creeks had to be forded. Later horses made freighting much easier.

At Christmas time the Oakfords invited the bachelor neighbours in for dinner and to spend the day with them. This certainly was much appreciated, otherwise it would have been a very lonely day for some of them.

The nearest post office was Halcourt so whoever went for the mail would bring it all and leave it at the store where we could go and pick it up.

In the meantime, Oakfords had a nice herd of cattle. There was a lot of free range and lots of hay to put up for winter feed — mostly vetch and peavine.

They also had land west of their homestead at Elmworth, at Oakford's Lake. They still own this land and Jack Oakford farms it.

Billy, Ed, and Jack were born while they lived at Elmworth. In 1923 they bought land in the Two Rivers district and later they moved with all their family there. They left the store with quite a lot of groceries and other goods in it. One night a fire was noticed in that direction and by the time some of the neighbours got there it was really a big blaze. Nothing could be saved! Mice and matches were most likely the cause of the loss.

Oliver was born after they moved to Two Rivers and he died as a young boy. The children drove five miles to go to the Lower Beaverlodge school for a number of years. After they had moved to Hythe, Billy died after a long illness. Eddie was in the air force and one day while stationed in Iceland he and his crew were out on a mission when their plane crashed into a mountain and all were killed. Eddie was married to Marie Ducharme of Elmworth and they have a daughter Carol Marie who is married and lives in Grande Prairie.

The Oakford boys Billy, Ed and Jack were ardent hockey players in Hythe. Now it will be up to the young Oakford boys in the third and fourth generations to carry on with the game. The Oakfords are still carrying on in the store business in Hythe.

The William Oakfords had moved to Edmonton in later years in life and both have passed on and are buried in the Hythe cemetery.

Florence married Fred Miller. Ella is Mrs. Pearson of Hythe. Julianna is Mrs. Tricker of Hythe, Fanny is Mrs. Steinbring of Hythe. Bill married Ruth Hoosier. Jack married Ina Southwell.

## ALEX PANDACHUCK

Alex Pandachuck was born in Regina in 1924 and came to the Elmworth district with his parents, Nicholas and Eugenia Pandachuck at the age of four years.

He attended the log school at Elmworth, completing the eleventh grade. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1942 and went overseas in the spring of 1944 where he completed a tour of 32 operations as a



mid-upper gunner, flying in Halifax bombers. He met and married his wife Margaret in England and they came to Canada in 1945. They purchased and moved to the Roy Hamilton quarter in 1946 and lived there until 1950 when they moved to the home place to live with Alex's mom and sister Nora. Alex's mom was not well at this time and passed away in 1952.

They have two children, Ian who married Anna Waters, has three children, and lives in Dawson Creek; Yvonne, who married Oswald Gustafson and lives in Grande Prairie.

Alex has driven a county school bus for the past 20 years and farms two quarters of land.

#### **ELI AND BERNICE PANDACHUCK**

Eli and Bernice Pandachuck started life together in a little house in the yard at Brewers and worked with them for a few years. It was during these years that Father Brewer pensioned off his prize horses and bought his first tractor. Lois, Lynne and Gary were born there.

During the early war years we contemplated a move to Dawson Creek to buy a blacksmith shop with brother, George Pandachuck. We decided against it but Eli spent one winter working in McEachern's garage. George's shop was blown up in the big Dawson Creek explosion.

In 1946 we moved into our own home on the Billy Cargill place, first filed on by Jim Dixon. We also had the George Grant quarter across the road, formerly owned by "Shorty" Ward and originally filed on by Ernie Harding.

Registered cattle and registered seed have been our main interests along with lumbering, as a winter past time.

During these later years Ann, Gay and Kim were born. The family is all married now and away except for Gary and his family who farm with us.

#### **JOHN AND AMY PANDACHUCK**

John was born at Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, moving to Grande Prairie and then to Elmworth as a young boy. When brothers and friends went off to war, a back injury kept him at home working the home farm and starting one of his own.

In 1943 Amy Sharland, from Red Deer and Camrose, arrived to teach in the one room log school. She stayed to become Mrs. John. Amy has taught many sons and daughters of those original students and also helped with Sunday School.

John ran a threshing machine, sawed lumber, did carpentry work on the side and is now working as a millwright for Imperial Lumber. He has a humorous story for each and every occasion.

Together they worked for church, school, hall and Junior Forest Wardens, John being supervisor for several years.

They have three sons. Robert married Mereme Chabinyk from Saskatchewan and is doing the farming at time of writing.

Donald is working off his second two-year contract with Geophysical Services International as drill supervisor in Indonesia. He hopes to come back to the farm. William is a sawyer for Imperial Lumber near Fort Assiniboine.

#### **NICOLAS AND EUGENIA PANDACHUCK**

Nicolas and Eugenia Pandachuck were born in Romania but met and were married in Saskatchewan. Eugenia Popesco was a widow with three children: Nick, living in Calgary, Betty, Mrs. Harvey Webber of Dawson Creek, and Albert of Elmworth.

While farming in the Regina area their family grew with the arrival of George, Evelyn, Eli, John, Walter and Alex, all settled on farms at Elmworth, Eugene, of Edmonton, and Jim, living in Ontario.

In 1927 the family moved to Five Mile Creek, east of Grande Prairie, where Jean, Mrs. Bob Bulley of Fort Nelson, B.C., was born. 1929 saw their final move to the Gus Miller quarter at Elmworth where the last baby, Nora, Mrs. Jim Sutton of Edmonton, joined the family.

The following year Nicolas passed away leaving Eugenia and the children to carry on with the farming. Their home became a stopping place for neighbours from the south on their way for mail and supplies.

The boys did janitor work at the school for many years and the Pandachuck name has been on the school register as pupil or teacher ever since their arrival in the area.

Grandma and grandpa Sazwan moved from the Wapiti and lived in the Pandachuck yard for several years. George, John, Jim and Alex each had a turn at farming the "home place" where Alex is still living. Eugenia passed away in March 1952. There are now 48 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren.

#### **WALTER AND MARY PANDACHUCK**

Walter and Mary Pandachuck came to live at Elmworth after their marriage in 1946, shortly after Walter had returned from being overseas with the Canadian Army. For four years they lived on the Pandachuck home farm in a small house which had belonged to Walter's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. T. Sazwan.

In the spring of 1951 they moved to the Howard Russell farm, three miles south of Elmworth in the Ravenswood school district. They had bought this farm in 1950 but delayed a year in moving, while a house was built. They have continued to live there. In 1963 Walter acquired the half-section formerly owned by Rusty Johnston and Ed Williamson.

Through the years Mary has taught school in Hythe, Wembley, Elmworth and Dawson Creek.

Walter and Mary have one daughter, Catherine now married and living in Surrey, B.C. and three sons, Peter, married, in Calgary, Danny, married, in Dawson Creek and Jack who also lives in Dawson Creek.

#### **PETE PETERSON**

Pete spent his winters trapping out by Nose Mountain in partnership with Carl Jacobson and at another time with Charlie Young.

They took supplies out by pack horse after threshing was completed. When the snow came they went out using a big dog to help carry their gear.

In 1937 and 1938 he had five cabins and would stay out only returning for Christmas.

He thought nothing of packing 40 or 50 pounds of trail gear on his back. When the snow was a foot deep

snowshoes would be used. After he married May Chisholm, Pete and his partner would come back to his home on the Wapiti every two weeks.

He was in World War II, was last heard of making registrations of veterans' graves in Holland.

### ALBERT POPESCO

Albert came from near Regina. His father rented farm land near Grande Prairie for a year. When Albert filed on his present land in 1927 he was under age, so it was a reserved filing.

He married Edith Besler in 1941. All his land was cleared by hand and he broke all the horses he needed.

A nearby slough offered the opportunity to trap coyotes and muskrats. He was a good axeman, often working winters in sawmills in the district.

They had a large family: Mildred, Florence, Arnold, Violet, Connie, Audrey, Clara, Wayne, Grace, David and Bruce. The three younger children are living at home.

### THE TOM QUINN FAMILY — by Isabella Quinn

I was born Isabella Cook at Hesson, Ontario in 1895. My husband Tom was also born at Hesson in 1891. We both grew up on farms and we were married at Hesson in 1911. Shortly after we went to Pence, Saskatchewan on the harvest excursion. After the harvest was completed we returned to Moorfield, Ontario where Tom worked in a flax mill for about one year. We then moved to Drayton, Ontario and Tom worked on the road with a team of horses for the next four years. It was at Drayton that the first three children were born — Gladys, Gerald and Pearl.

We wanted to go farming and since land was quite expensive in Ontario, we decided to move to Compeer, Alberta, where my sister Mary and her husband, Joe Querin, were living. We rented a settler's railway car and Tom came in this car with our belongings and I came ahead on the train with the three children. The youngest was six weeks and the oldest three years and I was quite young myself. We got to Winnipeg at about 9 o'clock in the evening and we had a three-hour wait. The children were tired and crying and there was no place except the floor to lay them down. To add to my frustrations, Gladys got lost. After much searching I found her outside on the street. I laid the children on the floor and I sat in a chair and we all went to sleep. When I woke up the train was ready to leave. The coach was about a quarter of a mile down the platform, but I made it just as the train started. I had to change trains in Kerrobert which is about 40 miles from Compeer, but nobody in the Kerrobert station had ever heard of Compeer as the name had recently been changed from Sleepy Hollow. However, after several hours we arrived at our destination.

We rented some land and farmed for the next four years. I recall my first horseback ride. Tom became very sick during the night and I knew I had to get the doctor. It was black dark and I had never ridden a horse before; I didn't even know how to put the saddle on, but I got it on somehow and set out across the fields to our nearest neighbour who lived about 2½ miles away. I rode for what seemed like hours before I realized that I was lost, so I let the horse go on his

own and he took me back home. I set out again and this time made it to the neighbour's place. He drove with his team about 20 miles to get the doctor. On my way home, the saddle blanket slipped off and scared the horse. The saddle turned and I fell off; however, the horse came back to me. I led him the rest of the way home.

The first two crops were good, but the next two were not so good so we decided to move to Toronto where we spent the next four years. Tom worked for the city as a drayman. One summer when work was scarce, we couldn't afford to live in the city, so we camped in the surrounding area and derived our livelihood from buying, selling and trading horses. Gordon was born during our stay in Toronto.

We had an offer to buy a farm at Compeer, so we decided to try farming again. We moved back to Compeer in a settler's car. These were railroad cars supplied at a reduced rate to encourage settlers to move out west. We had an overnight stop at Winnipeg so we went down town to get some groceries. When we returned, the cars had been shifted around. It took what seemed like hours climbing underneath railway cars before we found our car. We spent the next few years at Compeer where Jim, Don and Ron were born.

The crops in 1926 and 1927 were good, but the drought came in 1928, and the crops were very poor. In 1929 the crops were poor again. This year the crops were harvested by taking the reels and canvas off the binder and cutting off the heads of the grain. When the heads piled up on the knife, the binder was stopped and the heads of the grain were scraped onto the table of the binder. When the binder table got full, it was shovelled into a grain box and hauled to the threshing machine. That year, we harvested 135 bushels of wheat from 150 acres.

The crops were good in the Peace River country in 1929, so Tom, Gerald and Russell came up with the truck to haul grain. They stayed with Grandpa Cook, who had come up some years before. After working until late fall, they returned with a load of vegetables. I had been up earlier in the summer for a visit with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Cook.

We were all convinced that the future looked much brighter in the Peace River country, so in the spring of 1930 we set out in a covered wagon for Rio Grande. Don and Ron were about two months old at the time. We had traded out three quarters of land for about 40 head of unbroke horses which we tried to herd, but they were too wild. At Holden we traded some of the horses for a car and we shipped the rest on the train. We rented the Renninger homestead (NE 13-70-12) from Grandpa Cook. Roy was born up here. In 1937 we moved to the SE 13-70-12 which is the present home place.

Tom died in 1940 after a long illness. Gladys (Mrs. Jack Ray) lives in Beaverlodge, Jim in Saskatoon, Gerald in Edmonton, Lorne in Penticton, Russell, Don and Roy at Elmworth and Pearl (Mrs. Calvin Canning) and Ron in Grande Prairie. Gordon died in Edmonton in 1972.

I now live in Grande Prairie. While life has been difficult at times, the past years are filled with many happy memories.





Ravenswood school picnic, 1943.

## RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT — by George Donison

The Ravenswood school district contained the central part of township 69, south of the community of Elmworth to the Wapiti river.

Until 1927 this area was untouched except for a pack trail from the north used by trappers and hunters leading to a point on the river known as Jasper Crossing.

At this time the fame and publicity of the bumper crops and grain championships won in the Peace Country aroused the interest of many prairie people. They rushed in to file on homesteads that were reasonably accessible, generally on fringe areas of older settlements. Others that settled here included a few immigrants from over-crowded central Europe seeking new opportunities in agriculture.

1928 saw the old pack trail double into a wagon trail, dodging stumps and mud holes, branching out here and there to particular destinations. Log shacks sprouted in the bush in preparation for the coming winter, also to comply with the homestead duties.

Development was slow in this bush land and was further delayed as the depression of the 1930's set in. But the necessity of an education for the youngsters presented a problem which could only be solved by a "do-it-yourself" project. After some controversy over the boundaries and location the Ravenswood school was designated for the site on N.E. of section 15. By volunteer labor and material plus a small government grant the log building was completed in 1937.

In the meantime a few of the older children had attended Elmworth school six to eight miles to the north and for a term, class was held in Hans Haglund's house with a Mr. Ramsey as teacher. He was followed by Edith Lechelt who initiated the new log school house in February 1937 with a class of 20 pupils.

After World War II, the population in the district started to decline. A few of the boys served in the forces and on their return had taken up other occupations. Still others were moving to new locations allowing those remaining to enlarge their holdings. This trend decreased the school attendance in 1953 to eight pupils. Then centralization in the school system was introduced and bus service provided. The roads had by this time improved to a fair standard compared to the old wagon trails so bussing was more feasible. At this date there are only four children from Ravenswood attending school at Elmworth.

## ALICE FRANCES ROOFE — by Edna Moyer

Alice Frances Roofe, born in Norwich, England, was the daughter of James and Celia Roofe. James left the farming life to become a prominent Norwich businessman.

Alice, whose thirst for knowledge and quest for adventure was rare in the youth of her day, left her comfortable home to spend some time in Ireland as tutor and governess. Some years later she went to Germany where she attained fluency in speaking and writing the German language. Being a born linguist, four years in Paris perfected her French.

Following this she became governess to the daughter of a wealthy Hungarian family, in whose home she had her own apartment and servants.

In 1911 Alice followed her brother, Charles, to Canada, spending the winter in Toronto and then on to Camrose Normal the following spring. The next year she taught in the Pretty Hill school near Camrose and later in the Crow's Nest Pass, where her brother was an R.C.M.P.

In the spring of 1920 she arrived in Spirit River where Charles had a homestead on which he was in the process of building a typical pioneer log cabin in his own meticulous way.

In preparation for her coming, Charles had set up a tent inside the as yet partly-roofed and doorless cabin. Peace River mud was at its worst when the train pulled into Spirit River and the first mishap occurred when Alice's suitcase fell out of the borrowed buggy and was squashed into the mud by the wheels. When they reached the homestead another log had to be sawed from the partly cut door before she could crawl into the cabin. Alice slept under the tent and Charles under the stars. That night a bear ate the bacon and mauled the other groceries on a table near Charles' bed.

Undaunted by pioneer hardships, Alice became the first teacher of the Spirit Valley school, where classes were held in a granary. She rode to school on "Grip," Charles' pony with her lard pail dinner bucket. In 1923 she became the second teacher to teach in the recently built Elmworth log school.

This refined, cultured and unassuming woman became the wife of William Barr in 1924. With the aid of a cook book and her perseverance, she became a competent homemaker.

After the Kenny family moved away, Anglican services were held in the Barr cottage. Always a devoted church member she was later honored with a life membership in the W.A.

Her background and culture enriched the little community where she made her home for several years. Wherever she lived she became a friend and benefactor to many.

Alice and William Barr spent 27 happy and devoted years together. They travelled around the world, spent considerable time in England and Hawaii and wintered in California.

William passed away in their Vancouver home at the age of 84 years. She murmured sorrowfully, "Now I'm alone." Her faith that she would soon join her husband enabled her to carry on, again with the aid of her brother Charles. Not until she was well into her



nineties did the end come for this great and gracious lady.

#### JAN AND FRANCES SAWCHUK — by Julie Sawchuk

Jan and Frances Sawchuk came to Canada in 1928 from Wyczokki, Poland with a family of four, Steve, Phillipa, John and Mary. Their first stop was at St. Paul, Alberta. Here they were encouraged to go to the Peace River country where land was cheap "\$10.00 for 160 acres". This kind of opportunity was unheard of in their homeland. Jan, his two brothers-in-law Tom Kulicki and Philip Kalischuk, and a friend, John Silvaniuk, set out immediately to file on their homesteads.

When the men returned to pick up their families, they purchased their settlers' effects, loaded them on the train and shipped them to Wembley, which was the end of the line.

They travelled from Wembley with horses and buggy and the cow followed along behind. The first few nights were spent in straw piles much to the delight of the big mosquitoes. All four families stayed together in a log cabin on the Ervin Ruffert place, the S.E. 32-69-11-W6 while working on their homes. The tree growth was so dense and they were all so inexperienced in cutting them down that it took all the men and women to perform this task.

The depression of the thirties had arrived by this time so money was very scarce. To help, the women and children would pick blueberries and trade them

for groceries. The children had five miles to go to school and they either walked or rode horses. Later they had a home-made buggy for summer and a covered cutter for winter, equipped with a stove made out of a tin water pail.

As more settlers came it was decided to build a school close to home. The Ravenswood school district was formed and Jan along with many other men helped to build the school. It would be a long story to tell of all the hardships that were endured. Regardless, they decided that Canada was a good place to live and they wanted to become Canadian citizens so badly that Jan walked to Grande Prairie to get the necessary papers.

The other five children were born on the homestead. Here, neighbour helped neighbour and the women were midwives to one another. It was a trade that all the women knew.

Some of the many happy memories were attending church services and visiting neighbours afterwards. Families called on other families on Sunday afternoon. The local Christmas concert was a big occasion and a gala time for all.

Granny of the Beverly Hillbillies had nothing on these people. To make the occasion more joyous, and for "medicinal purposes" there was a little manufacturing of "you know what". Jan can recall that once he was told by a neighbour that the police were searching the area. In fright, he and his wife carried out a 45 gallon barrel of mash and hid it in the wheat crop. After the search was over the barrel had to be put back into the house but Jan and his wife found it was too heavy and had to call on a neighbour for assistance.

After 15 years Jan purchased land from Stan and Sam Kernolouch. They lived there until they moved to Beaverlodge in 1971, where they still reside. Jan still enjoys going uptown and swapping stories with other oldtimers.

Steve is married to Jadwicz (Jenny) Karpowicz. They have three children and farm in the Elmworth district. Phillipa married John Jarczyk. They had one son John, who passed away in July 1964 and later Phillipa married Robert Anderson, a carpenter and lives in Golden, B.C. John is married to Olga Oskaboyny and farms in the Hythe area. They have three children. Mary married Frank Burns, who was in the army, so they have lived in various places. They have four daughters (three are married); Frank died a few years ago and Mary now resides in Beaverlodge with her youngest daughter. Pete is married to Donna Anderson. They have four children, three boys and one girl. He farms in the Hinton Trail district. Florence married George Hanna. They have four children. George works for the Department of External Affairs, residing in Hazeldean, Ottawa. Albena married Stan Stewell, who at that time served with the Canadian Army. They have three boys and three girls and live in the Valhalla district. Frank married Julie Argyle. They have two boys and two girls and are farming in the Elmworth district. Joe married Janice Sterr and they have three girls and one boy. They are farming what used to be the home place, N.W. 36-67-11-W6.

To date, 1974, the Sawchuks have 35 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



A school boy's home made cart, 1934, at Brewers. John Sawchuk, Joe Dickinson and a field day visitor. Steve Sawchuk in the cart.



Mr. and Mrs. Jan Sawchuk's 50th. wedding anniversary, August 1966 with Mary, Albina, Florence, Joe, Pete, John, Frank, Steve, Phyllis, Mrs. Sawchuk, Mr. Sawchuk.



## GEORGE SAZWAN

George Sazwan born in Regina in 1912 came to the Peace River country with his folks in 1928.

They homesteaded near Wapiti which later became the Ravenswood school district. George took a homestead on the Smith Creek but did not prove up on it.

In 1940 George married Iris Smoke, whose folks had come from Webb, Saskatchewan in 1930 and homesteaded on the last quarter available in Elmworth district and where they still live.

After hiring out to farmers and working in logging camps in Alberta and B.C. he returned from Queen Charlotte Islands to the Wapiti, buying his father's and grandfather's homesteads.

While on the Wapiti in the forties George and a neighbor, John Ongman cut the logs with cross-cut saws. The logs were later sawed into lumber for the community hall at Elmworth.

Here he farmed until 1952 when he sold the land to Leonard Lightfoot, had an auction sale, then bought the general store and post office at Bonanza, Alberta.

In 1954 fire destroyed their home and business. They used a granary all summer for a post office while the store and living quarters were rebuilt.

After a few years George went back to farming again. In 1962 they had sold their land at Bonanza and moved back to Halcourt with three sons, Allen, Ed and Clark and one girl, Ann.

There they bought SE 17-71-10-W6 from Dave Ross which at one time had been the Andy Laing farm. They still live there but due to an injury in the bush in 1963 George was unable to carry on with the farm. In 1966 Allen married Pauline Dubrule from Cut Knife, Saskatchewan and bought the family farm. They now have one boy.

Ed passed away in 1964 at the age of 17.

## CARL SCHIELDGE — by Edna Moyer

What prompted Carl to leave his home in South Manchester, Connecticut, where he gained his skill as an axeman and trapper, will forever remain a mystery; but by 1913, he had reached Edson. There, he met Avery Kenny, who was also preparing to travel the Edson Trail to the Peace River country. Together, they drove in behind Avery's mule team.

Carl's skill as an axeman stood him and the early settlers in good stead. In return for building their homes he became an appreciated member of each home. For example, after building the Kenny log structures he lived with Avery for some years. Then, after constructing log buildings for the Dumbeck and later the Longson and Brewer homes he lived with each of these families in turn. It seemed that he lived vicariously in his own house!

Though a man of few words, he expressed great love for the out-of-doors; and was happiest when in the woods. Often he would say, "An axe, a frying pan and blanket are all you need. Nothing will hurt you out there."

For some obscure reason, about 1924, Carl decided to return to South Manchester, where he again made his home with a family who ran a large florist business. When we questioned him about his creden-

tials for crossing the line, he showed the label on the coat of his one good suit, "G. Fox and Co., Hartford, Conn." It must have worked!

By a strange coincidence, about a year later, I left to teach in that city. Occasionally, on a Saturday, Carl would come to visit at the manse, bearing a huge armful of greenhouse flowers. The next day the pulpit would be especially resplendent. No one in the large Presbyterian congregation, from all walks of life, would have believed in their wildest dreams that those beautiful flowers were the thoughtful gift of a trapper from northern Canada.

Carl's dignified, straightforward and unsophisticated manner quite endeared him to my aunt and uncle, especially the former when Carl taught her to play pinochle. Playing cards made her feel quite wicked and relieved some of the frustration of a minister's wife of that time.

Over my mantel hangs an oil painting of one of Carl's floral tributes, painted by my aunt.

Early one morning, a phone call from South Manchester informed us that Carl had passed away suddenly, at the age of 57 years. My uncle, Dr. Johnstone, a very busy man with his own congregation, accompanied me to the funeral.

When we, who knew him as a gentle and genuine friend, have passed on, the name "Elmworth", which was his suggestion for the first post office south of the Red Willow, will remain as his only memorial.



Carl Schieldge.

## THE JOHN SILVANIUK STORY

John Silvaniuk, a veteran of the Russian Army inquired about emigrating to Canada in 1928. Poland was crowded and much of his farm had been devastated by the war. Advertisements relaying the message "Come to Canada" induced the idea of emigrating.

The family, consisting of his wife Tatiana, his young sons Pete, Sam and Eugene, initially settled at St. Paul. However, he wasn't overly impressed with the land so he proceeded north to the newly opened Peace Region.

He filed on a homestead south of Elmworth. After paying the boat passage, \$1000 was left, the financial capital with which to begin their farming. It didn't buy much but it did buy a few tools and a cow.

John Silvaniuk was extremely enthusiastic about farming. This chunk of wilderness land looked immensely large compared to the small acreages in Poland. He did not shrink from the slow, tedious task of clearing the land.

His sons worked with him to contribute to the development. Pete was employed on the railroad being constructed between Hythe and Wembley. John had taken a mining job at Nordegg, Alberta.

Even though Tatiana Silvaniuk was a tiny woman, she had unlimited courage. While the men were away working, a bush fire spread to the homestead. She had been washing clothes in a beaver dam about a mile from the house. When she returned, fire was endangering her rough, straw roofed home and infants Sam and Eugene. Help was a long way off; the closest neighbour lived over a mile away. It rested on her to save the house and only through her quick thinking and pluckiness did she accomplish this feat. To this day she doesn't know how she did it for there was only a meager supply of water.

In 1929, John's brother Nick arrived in Canada to homestead land adjacent to the first Silvaniuk settlement. Both farms prospered and grew.

The boys stayed with their father until 1930 when Pete proved up a homestead by Sylvester's store. In 1937 he married Mary Derewenko. With a team of horses, a cow, a cutter and a shack full of mice they officially moved on to their homestead. It was a very raw experience for a young bride — a honeymoon with scampering mice running through the boudoir!

The other boys married and moved away. Sam moved to Bashaw when he married Leona Williams. Eugene wed Mary Bauman, thus it was left to Mike, the youngest to carry on his father's farm. He and his wife, the former Lillian Romanoff still own the original land.

Mrs. Silvaniuk loved nature and nature's growth. For years she cultivated one of the best gardens in the country. One could always see flowers blossoming as well. In 1961, she passed away. Her husband lived until 1972.

Even in his later years, John Silvaniuk stood tall and straight. This discipline was a tremendous part of his character — his life struggle hadn't been easy. However, the Silvaniuk's weren't the type of people to succumb to failure by giving up. They and their children would always carry on!



John Silvaniuk binding oats for George Donison, 1940.

## SEYMORE AND OLIVE SMOKE

Seymore Smoke came from Swift Current in the fall of 1929, leaving there during a blizzard. Alton Speed, Russel Carveth, Peter Dick and Ivan Red Cliff drove in his band of 22 horses over the trail from Swift Current via High Prairie. He had plenty of money when he left but with livery stop-over charges for the stock and overweight on his carloads, he was broke when he arrived. He claims that there was a \$15.00 freight charge on a cat and dog, hence money went fast.

The Smokes arrived at Beaverlodge at 6 p.m. and anxious to get settled in the new country, they drove all night over muddy roads to Dumbecks on the Red Willow. Homesteads were taken up as far out as Ewan Ross' but a suitable one was found where they now live, south-west of Elmworth.

Money was scarce in those days but having some experience at shoeing horses he turned his skill to good use. He also worked on pack horses for Bert Dalglish. Seymore even traded horse shoeing for some traps and harness. Custom buzz-sawing was another useful source of income.

Seymore married Olive Speed of Swift Current. They have three children who used a dog team in the winter to go to Elmworth school, two dogs if the smaller one could be caught, otherwise just the big dog. They are all married now and living in the district. Glen married Phyliss Brush, Doris married Aldwin Miller and Iris married George Sazwan.

Seymore chose land which was virtually all muskeg and which had been passed over by other settlers. Yet by cool logic and careful planning he turned the muskeg into highly productive soil by the simple expedient of discing it when the frost was only partially out. Thus there was a "bottom" to the field and a seed bed was readily obtained. The only other successful "muskeg" farmer we recall was Andy Bakka and he resorted to surface burning, a teacherous practice and in Seymore's opinion, wasteful. Andy claimed that he was merely following the practice of farmers in his native Finland.

## THE LYLE SPEED STORY — by Connie Speed Crerar

Our friends, the Mart Bickners and grandmother Mrs. Wills and her son Fred came here about 1927. They sent such good reports back and told of the woods that were here. My dad, Lyle Speed always loved the bush and just couldn't resist the thought of being in the



woods again. In November of 1929 he left Webb, Saskatchewan to go to Beaverlodge. He came by boxcar with household goods, some livestock and the dog and cat — the latter got lost.

Mother and we youngsters, Evelyn, Connie, Ruth and Roy stayed with my uncle at Pennant, Saskatchewan for a couple of weeks. Dad met us at Beaverlodge when we finally got in. The first thing my brother, who was four said was, "Dad, did you bring my little red wagon?"

Dad took us kids to our friends at Hinton Trail, the Bickners until Uncle Fred's house was finished. It was an open winter in 1929 and my mother sat under the spruce trees while the house was being built. The first thing we kids did when we got there was to cut a fir tree and to chew spruce gum.

As there was no school, dad helped form the Itipaw school district. They took the word Wapiti and turned it backward to spell "Itipaw".

We moved to Elmworth in 1931 and lived on Brewer's homestead. While we were there Alton Speed, Russell Carveth and friends herded the horses all the way from Webb. They got in about 4:00 a.m. and I still remember them coming. They included Smokes, grandpa Speeds and dad's horses. I forget how many there were.

We stayed at Brewers about two years and then went to our homestead, about 15 miles away. There was no school here either so dad helped form another school district, Sylvester, after Sylvester Creek. The last year we went there were four pupils. Evelyn Speed stayed at Moyers and went to school. Grandma Wills also stayed at Moyers.

Dad enlisted in the home guard in the Second World War. While he was gone mother bought an acreage near Grande Prairie. When he was discharged, dad and mother made their home in Grande Prairie. Dad worked at the Plywood factory until he was 76 years old. He died at 79, three years later. Mother died in 1962.

Grandpa and Grandma Speed and son Ted stayed at Fred Wills when we moved out before they went to the homestead at Sylvester. When people from Elmworth heard our name was Seymore Speed and we said that the Seymore Smokes were coming up, they said that people had queer names in Saskatchewan.



Welcoming Mrs. Speed at Brewers.

## THE STERR FAMILY — by Bill Sterr

As a young man Frank Sterr worked for a railroad contractor who was building the Bow River canal at Calgary, Alberta. This was when he got his first glimpse of Canada. At this time he also heard about the Mighty Peace River country and being a pioneer by spirit he caught what was called the "Peace River Fever".

After his job at Calgary finished he went back to Minnesota to work in his father's sawmill for 18 years until the urge to move became too great. At this time he contacted his former boss, E. C. Jense and made arrangements to come to Wetaskiwin, Alberta and rent six quarters of land seven miles west of there. Thus on January, 1924, Frank, his wife Hannah and eight children left Hillman, Minnesota to come to Canada.

They farmed there for five years during which time two more boys were born, making a family of four girls and six boys.

The Peace River fever still being with him, he left Wetaskiwin in 1928 to come to the Elmworth district, where he bought a quarter section of land and built a house. In April 1929 he left Wetaskiwin with a boxcar loaded with settlers' effects; his destination his new home at Elmworth.

Times were hard in the '30's and Frank worked as road foreman for many years, logging in the winters, also supplying the local school with cord wood, which was mostly sawn by hand.

Frank was always ready to lend a helping hand when a neighbour was in need. His wife Hannah did some home nursing in the community along with helping out in many other ways whenever possible. She was sorely missed by her family, neighbours and many friends when she passed away in December, 1946.

Their family is scattered around to some extent. Edna, the eldest daughter married Bill Howatt and lived and farmed at Elmworth, Alberta, until she passed away in 1967; May married Bill Head who farms at Grande Prairie. Laura lives in Seattle, Washington; Francis is at Dalbo, Minnesota; Reuben farms at Elmworth; George farmed at Sexsmith until he passed away in 1966; John has worked as a construction worker driving Cats, and eventually turned to his present job, a camp cook for the logging industry, making his home at Dawson Creek, B.C.; Myron (Slim) worked as a truck driver and after spending some time in the army, he joined the Forestry and is now living at Edson, Alberta; Bill worked with his dad on the farm, along with many different construction jobs, road building, logging, building until he went to work at the Beaverlodge Research Station where he is still employed. Bill married Wilma Armstrong of Veteran, Alberta. Wilma taught school in central Alberta and since her marriage has taught in Hythe and Beaverlodge and has served the community in many ways, including a stint at the library. Marinus (Pat) joined the Air Force after his mother passed away, serving nine years, then worked for Forestry one year, then joined the Alberta Civil Defence where he is still working and lives in Edmonton. Frank continued to farm at Elmworth until he sold his farm to Russel Quinn, then lived with members of his family



until his health caused him to move to Central Park Lodge, where he spent his remaining days. He passed away in May, 1970.



Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sterr, Myron (L), John, Reuben, Pat, Bill, George, May, Laura and Edna. (R)

### AMY AND CLYDE STEWART — by Amy Stewart

I, Amy Stewart was born, raised and married to Clyde Stewart in the state of Iowa, U.S.A.

Years of hard work and a family of four children growing larger, there was no hope of us owning a piece of land of our own there. We turned our hopes and dreams to Canada.

After a brief stop at Moose Jaw, another in the Lacombe district, we arrived in the Mighty Peace and took our homestead in 1929. We now had a family of six.

Dr. Carlisle, living in Wembley was our nearest doctor but many kind neighbors were ever ready to lend a helping hand through sickness or distress. Alberta, our youngest daughter was taken from us after having scarlet fever in 1930.

We all worked hard and got through the lean years of the thirties. Many nights I would watch out the window near midnight for Ned and Pinto, our faithful team of horses to come over the hill on Saturday night, pulling the grain chopper and buzz saw with Clyde walking behind at 40 below zero. That was our means of income, along with milking cows, shipping cream, hatching and raising chickens and pigs. We cleared all our land by hand and broke it with horses.

Soon the children married and moved to homes of their own: Mary Bouma of Hamilton, Ontario, Marvin in Grande Prairie, Mildred Quinn in Penticton, May Quinn on the home farm at Elmworth and Thelma Smith of Beaverlodge.

Clyde passed away in 1954 and I moved into Beaverlodge the same year. I have had no unemployment problems and have enjoyed sewing and mending for many wonderful friends.

I love this little town and plan to stay until I journey to the Land of Peace.

### VICTOR THIEL

I was born in Odessa, Ukraine, Russia on May 20, 1900. My father was a very respected gentleman and had a lithographic business. My forefathers emigrated to Russia in the early 1800's to escape the famine in southern Germany following the Napoleonic Wars. They travelled on booms of logs with houses built on top with an open air view of the beautiful scenery of

the Danube valley and all the comforts of open air camping. For company they had six or so children to worry about. The trip took six months. They travelled through countries quarantined for several diseases and thus had to wait until the danger was over. In Belgrade they even had a visit from the Sultan of Turkey who tried to induce them to migrate to Turkey. The sad part of it was that my great-great grandfather lost half his children and wife on the trip of deprivation and sickness. So they became established in Russia and being of good German "Schwabisch" stock worked their fool heads off to become prosperous and very respectable citizens.

I left Russia in December, 1918 for Germany with the intention of learning about agriculture as I loved the farm life and did not want to be a city man. Naturally I expected to return to Odessa during vacations from the agriculture school and apprenticeship, in plain language being a farm hand. I had received some theoretical training in farming in the Agricultural Technical Institute in Odessa but due to the revolution I had decided on training in Germany and I never have seen Russia again. I graduated from the University of Hohenheim in the fall of 1923. Times were really bad economically and spiritually in Germany at the time and I was depressed so when I had an opportunity to emigrate to Canada as a farm hand I grabbed it and I landed at Camrose in May 1924. I had to sign a contract with the Lutheran Emigration Board and a host farmer for \$20.00 a month. My fare from Germany to Camrose was about \$200 and my luggage and monetary resources were minus nothing.

Another experience was not at all kind. I worked hard for my \$20 a month but after the harvest my boss told me that he was broke and couldn't keep me on this wage during the winter. Oats were selling at 75 cents and wheat at \$1.25 a bushel at the elevator at Camrose in the summer of 1924 and a Ford car about \$400 for a Deluxe model. I could stay there for my board. Another farmer wanted me to feed and look after 40 head of cattle for free while he planned to go for the winter to Oregon. Of course I could batch and buy the necessary groceries on his account. Well I was fortunate, I got a job with a Swiss family for \$10 a month and board and they were nice to me. I felt very humiliated when my first boss deducted \$2.00 for the movie shows he invited me to go to and \$2.75 for beer consumed by me on two picnics and he was not a foreigner but a good Ontario farmer.

To try my luck in British Columbia I went to Vancouver and got a job with an Italian contractor digging ditches. I was willing to work but by the end of the first day I was finished. It was just too hard for me to compete with the Italian workers. There was no other work available there so I took a job on a dairy farm at Ladner at \$40 a month. The people were nice to me. The work hours were long — from 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. I had to milk 12 cows morning and night and do other farm work besides caring for the milk cows. Then I got a job on a saw mill and averaged \$75 a month. I built myself a little shack and bought some chinchilla rabbits for high prices with the theory you pay for what you get. I paid \$25 for my first doe and after I had 50 mature rabbits I sold them all with the





The Victor Thiels at home, 1934.

cages for \$75 because chinchilla was out of style. I lost my job at the mill in Ladner in September 1927 because of a fire which destroyed most of the mill.

I was advised to take advantage of the harvest ticket and go to the Peace, which I did with \$250 in my pocket. I took a job near Wembley, my choice of \$75 a month or \$4 a day. I took the \$75 and won as it rained most of the month and otherwise I would get only my board. My boss told me that he had heard of a quarter of land for sale in Elmworth for \$800. I made the deal. It was really nothing but a bush and swamp homestead but I felt it was on a road, close to school and store and I would have something of my own. There were about 40 acres of fairly open land to clear.

I had studied some French in the school in Russia but no English. After two or three months I had no problems to understand people and I started gradually thinking in English. After that I was on my way to becoming a new Canadian.

I made a \$250 down payment on my land and had a two year period to pay the balance. In the winter of 1927-28 I got a job ice fishing at Faust for a good salary of \$75 a month plus board. After two months I was on the way up. In the spring of 1928 I got a job at the Experimental Sub-station in Beaverlodge. It was at the start of the depression and my wages were 18 cents an hour, with board deducted. I was hoping that I could participate in the research but Mr. Albright could keep me on staff only past the harvest season. Then I went back fishing with a partner to Snipe Lake. We spent some \$500 for nets and fishing gear and stayed in an abandoned shack close to the lake. We had to pay a team to take our supplies and fish to and from High Prairie. The fishing was not bad and we made a little more than expenses but paid for our gear. When I went to cash one of the cheques in High Prairie I found that the fish company had declared bankruptcy and I could not collect a cent; besides I had to pay a lawyer for his efforts. Anyway I could not pay my land payments and after much trouble found a kind-hearted person who gave me a mortgage at 11%!

So I worked the second summer on the Experimental Farm. In the mean time I took up a homestead at Snipe Lake. Being a big landowner now and very lonely I took the advice of a friend and proposed to my wife



The Victor Thiel family. Christmas, 1946. Victor, Vera, Oscar, Mrs. Thiel, Elizabeth and Paul.

Anna. A man and his wife as a team were bound to help each other to get ahead. I had not much experience in this department even if I was 31 years old. Today I would not have done it if I wanted to be fair to my future wife. First you should have a comfortable home, a paying job or farm and then you have the right to bring a wife to your place.

Well, we moved to the farm in a rebuilt log house. Anna made it comfortable but the financial success did not materialize, the Depression, frost in the fall, hail, etc. hit us hard. It took years until we became established. I don't have to tell about the Depression years it was Hell but in many ways we were happy. Gradually we expanded our farm and moved on the George Grant place as he had retired. We had a lot more work and more debts. The grain prices were terrible. A neighbor had some 20 pigs and got 4 cents per pound! Everybody envied him for his luck as they had been much lower before. Anyway we farmed in Elmworth until 1966 and moved from there to Delta, B.C., to the district I knew in 1926-27. We have our own small home, a garden and are not far from Vancouver. Anna has it nicer too and I have my hobbies, sketching,

painting in water colors and indoor swimming. I had to quit hiking and kyaking because of arthritis in my hip. Instead I am travelling more by train and plane and do enjoy it. Our children are all on their own and happy. Vera, Mrs. A. Hartman is in Goodlow, east of Fort St. John. Her children are grown up by now but Lee the youngest son is still at home. Two of her children are married. Oscar is near Victoria, employed in a bakery as a maintenance man. Elisabeth, Mrs. O. Stuart is in Edmonton. Her husband is working for the Toronto-Dominion Bank as an agricultural adviser. Paul is not far from us in Port Moody and has a good position in an electronic factory.

Victor's story of ice fishing at Snipe Lake omits one detail. The fish had to be filleted as they were taken from the water in 40-below weather. This was done without the use of mitts and Victor explained that if his hands became cold he would warm them by immersing them in the lake!

Also he does not tell of his interest in music and the many hours he played for church services at Elmworth and of Anna's effort to aid the congregational programs. One venture was trying when Victor and Matthew Boyd were competing in the solo class at the Grande Prairie music festival and both were required to sing "Annie Laurie", Scotty Boyd in his heavy brogue and Victor in German accent!

One of Victor's favorite songs is the "Wooden Heart", a German ballad which launched Elvis Presley on his illustrious career. It was always a treat to listen to Victor sing, in German:

Can't you see I love you?  
Please don't break my heart in two.  
That's not hard to do 'cause  
I don't have a wooden heart.

#### **PREACHER THOMPSON**

Preacher Thompson homesteaded the quarter which Bob Frame lived on. He was a close friend of Rev. Alexander Forbes of Grande Prairie; they had come from the same area in Scotland.

Though he seemed different and not quite belonging, he must have been kind. When he found his neighbor Charlie Ward living on rabbits, as many did he told Charlie he could butcher one of his steers. Also, he freely offered him the use of his machinery. Charlie's friends would know he would be amply repaid.

When his homestead duties were fulfilled, Preacher Thompson supplied several pulpits in the general Sexsmith, Clairmont area, always driving a horse and buggy. From there, it seems no one now knows where he went.

#### **CLYDE UNDERWOOD AND AMOS LOPEMAN**

Clyde Underwood and Amos Lopeman came into the Elmworth district from Spokane and filed on adjacent land around 1926. Their acquaintanceship was of long standing but on the homestead they rarely spoke to each other and when they did they quarrelled.

Amos farmed only 80 acres. His one building was house and stable. He lived in one end and the horses in the other. Neighbours recalled that his house caught fire and was completely destroyed.

Clyde also had a house and barn and farmed. He is remembered for his remark, "How can you afford to live when you can't afford to die?" He retired to Beaverlodge where he lived for several years. He was killed in a car accident enroute to Dawson Creek.

The bodies of Clyde Underwood and Amos Lopeman were returned to Spokane — strangely on the same train.

#### **ALF WARD**

Alf Ward was a sign painter and spent most of his time working in Grande Prairie. He had a little cabin on the Red Willow to which he had brought a new bride. His land joined George Dumbek's on the east. They stayed at Elmworth only a short while.

#### **NELLIE AND SID WATSON**

Sid Watson came from Ireland with his parents in 1908. They lived in the Bonnie Doon district of Edmonton from 1908 to 1916. In 1916 they came to the Peace River country. Sid filed on a homestead, the S.W. 22-70-11-6 at Elmworth in 1919. In 1920 he exchanged work with Gordon Moyer, his nearest neighbor and together they built his first log cabin.

In 1926 he was married to Nellie McDougall who had moved from the Cypress Hills with her parents Ida and Neil McDougall to live in the Lake Saskatoon district. After living in Grande Prairie for a year they loaded up their sole possessions on a hay rack and with a team of horses moved to Elmworth to make their first home.

After farming for a while with a dream of making a fortune from registered oats, the greatest disappointment came in 1930. Having grown a beautiful 30 acre field of registered oats which had sold the previous year for 60¢ per bushel, they received a mere 20¢ per bushel for one carload they were lucky enough to sell to the Olds Agricultural School and the balance went for about 9¢ per bushel.

From 1939 to 1945 they ran a store and post office at Elmworth for Art Funnell which he had purchased from J. W. Dickinson. Three children were born during that time, who received a good start in life under the wonderful guidance of their first teacher Mrs. Edna Moyer in a little school built of logs. In 1945 they left the Elmworth district and moved to Grande Prairie where the children had more opportunity to complete their education. The oldest of the family, Jim now lives at Yorkton, Saskatchewan where he is manager for Case Machinery. Dorothy, now Mrs. Otto Klettke lives at Cawston, B.C. where they operate a store, the post office and an orchard. Betty May, the youngest now Mrs. Roger Houle, lives at Oliver, B.C. where her husband is employed with Bendix Trailer Sales. Betty May still works for the Bank of Commerce.

Sid and Nellie are now retired at Oliver, B.C. and reside at Fairview Manor there.

The Watsons are very modest. Joseph Archer used to tell about a very efficient and capable secretary, Nellie McDougall who served him well in his offices at Wembley and Beaverlodge. At other times Nellie operated an excellent Ladies' Wear store in Grande Prairie. Sid made history in Grande Prairie by brightening the grounds of the Avondale school with beautiful displays of flowers, something quite unseen



hitherto at public buildings. At the same time he created a minor farmstead at Bezanson to the delight of Edmonton-bound travellers. Prior to this the Watson home at Elmworth was a focal point of beauty and community life, just as Sid's parents, the John Watson's home near Wembley had been in the early years of the settlement.

The Watson family moved to town,  
Some with red hair some with brown.  
They will be missed without a doubt  
By the Elmworth folk like all get out.

Sid by his Irish grin and wit,  
Nellie with her cheerful smile that lit  
The Lamp of fellowship and cheer,  
Embracing all from far and near.

Gertrude Dickinson



Sid and Nellie Watson bidding farewell to Elmworth, 1945.



Sid Watson at the Avondale School, Grande Prairie. "The tallest sweet peas in Grande Prairie."

## GEORGE WATT

George Watt, a brother of Mrs. Margaret Miller was born in Thurso, Scotland in 1891. He worked in a clothing store, a drapers until he enlisted in 1915 in the Seaforth Highlanders of the British army as an infantryman. He saw service in India, Mesopotamia, Syria and France.

In 1920 he joined his sister Margaret Miller on her journey from Thurso to Canada. At Elmworth he built a house in the Miller yard. George did some farming but with ill health due to malaria and a weakened heart he couldn't carry a full program. He died in 1938 and was buried in the Halcourt cemetery.

His particular interest was that of a cabinet maker. Another hobby was tuning up cars.



George Watt.

## THE WILLIAMS STORY

Direct from Birmingham, England to the Beaverbrook school district was quite a jump for Mrs. Ellen Williams, who came out in 1924 with her son Tom to join her other son Len and daughter Nell, Mrs. W. H. Walker, and settle to live on a homestead. Being introduced to a leaking sod roof, grubhoe, wild strawberries, mosquitoes, July 1st at Rio Grande, house dances where the record was turned by hand because of a broken spring, Indians, bucking horses, sixty below weather etc. etc. was all part of the "Canadianization."

They recall good neighbors, the Brushes, the Herb Jordans (the district barber), the Ducharmes, who introduced Tom to the bush and axe, Mrs. Holmes and son Will, and that irrepressible Irishman, John Carrigan who was reputed to have kept Rosy, the sow, in the "parlor" and who gave us some "spuds" which he called "Red Willow Stump Pushers" because when planted under a tree they would push the tree over, thus saving labor! Also one recalls Mr. McCardle, John Wilbur, the Cooks, the Koebels and Mr. Dicky and his buggy-horse "Fanny." Everyone looked forward to the annual school meeting which was one of our sources of entertainment and which lacked nothing in fire and spirit.

And of course the bachelors' prime interest, the shortage of the opposite sex. Nell was already married to Will Walker and they had a daughter, Helen. Len married Bertha Marlowe, a former acquaintance from England. They had two children, Tom and Mary. The other brother, Tom was run down by Lucy Leckie of Rio Grande and they have a daughter, Gloria Jean.

After Mrs. William's death in 1937, Mr. and Mrs. Walker and daughter Helen moved back to England. Len continued farming, finally turning his farm over to his son Tom.





Nell Walker and her pet lambs, 1931.

Tom and Lucy built their first home at Halcourt where Tom worked for Art Funnell and played and sang with Bert Funnell's orchestra for many years until they moved to the farm at Hazelmere in 1943. They remained there until 1963 when they moved to their present residence in Beaverlodge.

Tom and Lucy always had an attractive flower and vegetable garden, whether at Halcourt, Hazelmere or Beaverlodge and the tradition has expanded with the years so that now their grounds is the show place in Beaverlodge. Tom gives all the credit to Lucy but in an unguarded moment will admit that at least he is permitted to cut the grass and do the weeding. Daughter Gloria Jean is married to Byron Davis and spends her spare time in her garden and in the High school library. Perhaps the Williams' garden is "a bit of England, Peace River style."

#### LEWIS FRANKLIN YOUNG

Lewis Franklin Young travelled by oxen over the Edson Trail in 1916 to settle on his homestead near Halcourt. He opened a blacksmith shop where he was kept busy sharpening plough shares and shoeing horses.

In 1919, Lew married Mabel Florence Chisholm (nee Hartnell) who had five children from a previous marriage; Gladys, Pearl, Harry, Helen and Mabel (May). The Youngs moved to his wife's homestead at Elmworth, after selling their property at Halcourt. Farming then was a very different thing to what it is nowadays. Oats were 3 cents a bushel after hauling them to Beaverlodge with a team of horses. In the years to follow Lew and Mabel had four more children; Charles, Lewis and Frances. Lucille died in early childhood.



The Charlie Young family and wild fruit from the Wapiti.



In 1932 the Youngs sold the property at Elmworth and moved to his homestead on the Wapiti. Here he took up market gardening and had a blacksmith shop. Mabel and Lew loved flowers and shared them with friends by giving them roots, seeds and flowers. There was always a large garden with all kinds of vegetables. He found joy in giving these to everyone who came to visit. In the summertime, Lew would take people from various places across the river in his row boat to pick raspberries. The Indians who had trapped near the Youngs were their friends and often came to visit.

The family was saddened in 1940 with the passing of their dear wife and mother, Mabel. Lew stayed on at the Wapiti until 1947, when he moved to Sylvan Lake, Alberta, living there until his passing in 1958.

His son Charles now owns the Wapiti homestead. He married Anne Hemerle and they have two girls, Shirley and Cathy. Lewis Junior married Dora Pollard, daughter of Josephine Pollard (Clarke). They have three children, Debbie, David and Digby. Frances married Vic Ramsay, who died in 1966. There were three children, Lloyd, Wayne and Lynda. Since, in 1970, Frances has married Albert Schappert, who had one son Melvin.

### MEMORIES

It could only happen in Elmworth: storekeeper Joe Dickinson making the rounds on New Year's day, cancelling the debts of some of his customers who were in strained circumstances. Or perhaps you recall the maternity case when Nurse O'Neill arrived late and found that the baby had been born under makeshift circumstances on the floor of the cabin. The baby was named Linoleum!

We think of piracy as high sea robbery. Perhaps the term is synonymous with cattle rustling. And what about bags of fescue seed lifted from combine dumps? Or the local citizen who returned from a penitentiary

stretch explaining to his neighbors that he had "paid" for the grain he had stolen?

One fall farmers out Hinton Trail-Elmworth way had prosperity coming. Bins were full, elevators empty. The trail to Beaverlodge was long and there was work to be done at home. Custom trucking was a new service and an "outsider" descended upon them with his fleet of trucks plus more local trucks under contract.

Mammoth three-ton trucks shuttled back and forth day and night and the bins were emptied. Now all the farmer had to do was to pick up his grain tickets at the elevator and head for the bank.

However, it seemed that some of the trucks had slipped loads into elevators at Hythe, Hualien, Albright and Wembley. There was neither quota nor identification. Thus, quite a few grain tickets could not be located after the trucking syndicate vanished into thin air. It is a subject which is not discussed among the older generation of farmers southwest of Beaverlodge.



Building the Elmworth hall, 1948.



Allan McDonald and Hubert Black at the polling booth, 1917.



Putting up ice, Red Willow River.



A group from Elmworth lunching after a plot tour of the Experimental Station, 1938.



Raspberry picking people, from Halcourt and Elmworth.



An early picnic on the Red Willow River. Avery Kenny in the democrat. Standing with baby over arms Bill Oakford. Standing at right Mrs. Kenny at left Jim Grant and Carl Schiedge. Mrs. Oakford and 3 girls. Two Longson boys, Mrs. George Whiting, Mrs. Longson and two children, George Whiting, Hubert Black and friends.



Berry Picking. Back: Bill Barr, Bob Frame, Bernice Brewer, Jim Grant, Adelle Connell, Edna Moyer. Front: Mrs. Barr, Jo Grant, Miss Tucker, Mrs. Tom Williams, Mrs. Campbell.





Stacking the crop.



C.O. Pool's crop of Garnet wheat, Beaverlodge, 1930; yield 48 bushels per acre.



# GIMLE

In his book, "The Wandering Trails of Man," Hans Hommy quotes literature presented by the Beaverlodge Board of Trade:

"Of all the agricultural spaces of the famous Peace River basin the picturesque and fertile valley of the Beaverlodge witnessed the first white settlement of any appreciable extent when on the 13th of July, 1909 the intrepid little band of Ontarians numbering 31 souls, after an eventful overland journey of 600 miles with ox teams arrived at the crest of the slope overlooking the beautiful valley in which they were to make their future homes. Here the little colony, augmented by the two or three white families who had come in the previous year, proceeded with characteristic tenacity and fortitude to expand and prosper.

"We find that two of these white families that preceded the aforementioned settlement were Norwegians. Anton Dahl, with his two sons, were there in the fall of 1908, while "Halvor" Johnson, a Telemarking was there in 1907 and moved his family there towards the spring of 1908. He had sons and daughters that were married, so we find these sons of Vikings have swelled the settlement of the Beaverlodge country considerably.

"In 1915 some had crossed the Beaverlodge and taken up a few homesteads between Beaverlodge and Hythe. In 1916 the writer, with wife, six sons and three daughters also went across the Beaverlodge river and settled. In 1917 this settlement was augmented with three Norwegian families, Jorgen Johnson, Jens Anderson and Oscar Wedell. Other families added to the community and in 1919 a school had to be organized

and a school house built. The district was named Gimle."

The statement has several points of interest. One is that many of the early settlers were Norwegian and Mr. Hommy, himself a Telemarking was quick to note that Oliver Johnson was also from his native province of south Norway. What he possibly did not know was that Anton Dahl, neighbor of Oliver was also from Telemarking.

Another point of interest is that it names the Gimle district. Over the years the spelling has caused some confusion as there is a Gimli district, an Icelandic settlement, in northern Manitoba.



A surprise party for Granny Stephens on her 80th birthday 1954.

## FOOTNOTE by Lena Larsen

We think of the many years we have spent in the Gimle School District. Sam Larsen and Albyn Dyke are the only original homesteaders left in the district.

We think of the way the country has changed and of our many friends and neighbours who have passed on, and we who are left have gotten old and changed too. There were people in our district from many parts of U.S.A., England, Sweden, Norway, Scotland, Quebec



and many other parts of Canada. It made a wonderful community.

We think of so many of the school children who came by here and would stop in to see the new lambs, the pups, or any other newly-born animal that had arrived. They usually stopped at the house when we had some for them. We are still interested in all of them but they are scattered in many different places now. It really would be wonderful to live some of those days again.

We have had the happy privilege of helping care for many children. Some of them were nephews and nieces, we loved them all but I won't mention them at this time. I can't think of anything sadder than when children lose their mother. One cold December day in 1928 we went to visit the Ole Heglands. When we drove into the yard a little boy five years old was wading in the snow with his stockings down around his ankles, his coat wide open and a wee little cap on his head. The mother, Mrs. Hegland was very ill in bed. We decided we would like to take the little boy home with us if the parents would let us. Olaf went home with us and stayed many years, he became like a son to us; we had a lot of pleasure from him. He started school in September 1929 and it was always such a pleasure when he brought his school reports home for he always got good marks. The years went by and he grew up, then he went to serve his country.

I remember how I wept when he left and prayed that God would keep his protecting arm around him. How we looked forward to his letters! He returned from overseas in 1945, well and happy. He took up farming near us, married and raised four children, and now he is a grandfather. We still wish him well.

Mr. and Mrs. Chris Sylvester lived across the road from us for many years. They were wonderful neighbours and good community workers. Chris was chairman of the Gimle school board for several years. We had so many of the same interests and enjoyed some wonderful times together. Then there was the Jens Anderson family, the Sextons, Hugh Thompson, Fairs, Martins, Armstrongs, Byron Davis was one of the boys who used to stop in on his way from school — and then there was Mrs. Dick who would call in after taking her boys to school. I would want to make her tea and she would say "Let me make the tea then we will have good English tea!" Those were the good days. Yes! There were more neighbours — we have fond memories of all of them.

We say "Thank you" for the memory of helpful and kindly deeds and comforting words said and done by neighbours and friends in the days that are gone now. It is like flowers beside the pathways as the thoughts travel back over the 53 years we have lived here at Gimle.

Thank you dear friends and neighbours.

#### AUGUST ANDERSON

August Anderson was born in Sweden. He emigrated to Minnesota as a young man, and came to the Peace River country in 1917, filing on a homestead in the Gimle district. August was a bachelor and one day when a neighbour called on him and found him scrubbing clothes on a washboard, August wiped the

sweat from his brow and said "You know, it is a good idea to have women do this kind of work. It's too hard for a man!"

He found batching and homesteading pretty hard going, and in 1945 poor health forced him to leave for a milder climate, so he went to Kelowna, B.C. to settle. Sam Larson visited him there in 1947 and found him happy, contented and in improved health.

#### OSCAR ANDERSON — by Lena Larsen

Oscar Anderson was born in Sweden and homesteaded in what later became known as Gimle School district. He was expert at building with logs. Mrs. Anderson, of French descent was born in Minnesota. In those days one had to be very sick before a doctor was called. Thus when Mrs. Anderson became very ill, Oscar phoned from the pay station at Jim Pack's to ask Dr. O'Brien to come out to the homestead. However Dr. O'Brien was not able to come right away but it so happened that a new doctor had come on the train to Grande Prairie that forenoon. He was Dr. A. M. Carlisle. Mr. Joseph Archer brought him out by car to attend Mrs. Anderson. That was Dr. Carlisle's first case in this country.

Mr. and Mrs. Anderson asked me to cook supper for Dr. Carlisle and Mr. Archer. I remember how Dr. Carlisle enjoyed the home baked bread and praised it. I was very proud as I was a bride of only three months.

Mrs. Anderson died in July 1921. Oscar then had a sale in August 1921 and returned to Montana where he is now buried.



The Oscar Anderson home with visitors, Mary Hogg (Wallen) and brother Harry Hogg.

### **DOUGLAS AIRTH**

Douglas Airth homesteaded in Gimle school district. He stayed only a little while. He married after he left and lived in Edmonton. After their little girl died they went to Cleveland, Ohio.

### **MARTIN BAKKEN**

Martin Bakken was born in Norway and emigrated to Minnesota, U.S.A. He married there and they had three children. After his wife's death, Martin came to the Peace about 1917 or 1918, accompanied by a son and a daughter. Martin and his son, Edward, both filed on homesteads in the Gimle district. Martin Bakken did not have an easy life. His son died about 1927, which was a blow to him. Gelena, his daughter, married and left the country. Years later Martin suffered a stroke and was taken to a nursing home in Edmonton, where he died.

### **CECIL V. BROWN**

Cecil V. Brown came from Ontario. The son of a Methodist minister, he was well educated and an accomplished pianist. He bought Leon Paré's soldier grant in the Gimle school district, but having no experience at farming and finding the work not to his liking, he stayed only two years. Gene Davis now owns the land.

### **SILVERTIP CAMPBELL**

One of the early settlers to the Beaverlodge Valley came from Kinistino, Saskatchewan prior to 1910. He was John Malcolm (J. M.) Campbell known throughout the district for his flowing snow-white beard, which won for him the sobriquet, "Silvertip".

Prior to the building of the C.P.R. he had come from Ontario to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan crossing the prairies by Red River cart. There he had a store and livery stable. He also freighted in supplies. After his three children, Jennie, Stewart and Frances had grown up, his restless spirit drove him on to new frontiers, the much publicized Peace River country.

His first trading post was at Englishman's Lake near the present site of Wembley. In 1914 he persuaded his daughter Jennie and her family, the Charlie Conleys, to join him there. Jennie had many misgivings as she clung to her youngest daughter, May, to protect her from the lurching of the wagon over the Edson Trail. However, J. M. assured her that things would get better, so on they came.

At that time there were six children in the Conley family, John, Lawrence, Glen, Jean, Frances and May. There was no school so the older children were sent back to Kinistino to stay with relatives. In due time Hillhead school was built, the first teacher being Margaret McNaught, a true pioneer teacher. Later the Conleys added four more to the school register, Mike, Eva, Gordon and Betty, a family of ten. Later they farmed at Flying Shot.

As the community grew, Silvertip pushed on. This time he took land and built his trading post on the banks of the Beaverlodge river about five miles southwest of the present town of Hythe. Many a trapper he grub-staked for the winter.

In his younger days, J. M. was well known on Sports

Days for his skill as a pole vaulter. However, the story goes that at one time he ran "amuck". As he was vaulting over a small creek his pole stuck in the muck and there he hung in mid-stream. No doubt his enthusiasm became a little dampened.

J. M.'s pioneer spirit remained with him into his eighties when he filed on a homestead at Montney Prairie in the B.C. Block. However he was not able to prove up his land and passed away in his 88th year.

### **GENE DAVIS**

Eugene P. Davis was born in San Joaquin Valley of California. His grandmother had come across the Great Plains as a baby in a covered wagon. His father raised cattle, grain, oranges, olives and children, eight of them. On his graduation from Occidental College in Los Angeles, Gene decided to quit California because of its increasing population and the difficulties it created and spent a year in Old Mexico. However, he did not like government controls in practice there and took the advice of his favorite professor at Occidental to go to Canada, the land of opportunity. Thus Gene arrived at the University of Alberta in 1927 for a short course in Canadian agriculture. That winter he played basketball with the late Herb O'Brien and was a room mate of George Neeley at St. Stephens on the University campus. In the spring he sought work at the Beaverlodge Experimental Station to which Superintendent W. D. Albright agreed providing that Gene would work for the prevailing wage of 30c an hour, could handle horses, and must have a recommendation from one of the professors at the University. Gene's reply was that driving horses at 30c an hour should not call for a recommendation from anyone. This remark resulted in a long letter from Mr. Albright stating that he was looking for a staff who were not mere navvies but men who expected to advance with the times. As it turned out Gene worked at the Experimental Station that summer under the direction of Cliff Stacey, roomed with H. W. V. Clark in Mrs. Halliday's log cabin and restaurant. For transportation he used a saddle horse lent him by Ross Cawston. He was looking for land with a favorable slope which might be irrigated. He chose the Joe Campbell place and started farming with a Fordson tractor and 16-inch Oliver breaking plow.

Gene returned to California in 1932 and there married Geraldine Jennings of Visalia, California. Gerie is of English descent and her father raised mules for the U.S. army used in World War I as well as cattle, pigs, alfalfa, race horses and polo ponies. Gerie is a graduate from Fresno State University and U.S.C. in Los Angeles. They met when she was teaching school. When Gene and Gerie returned in 1937 they brought a box carload of materials to build a house of California red wood and a grand piano for the living room. They returned to California in 1945 and came back to Beaverlodge in 1952 with a caravan containing a full line of construction equipment, including two "Cats", a road grader, a 10-yard scraper, a mobile repair shop and the necessary lowbeds for their transportation. In all the cavalcade travelled 2915 miles from Visalia, California and it made an impressive sight as it moved slowly but surely on 56



wheels to its new home, to be used for road construction and land clearing. The trek through six States and one province took seven weeks, not all pleasant. One outfit was over-length, over-width, over-height and over-weight with different regulations to comply with and permits to get to travel through each state. All regulations said no travel before sun up or after sun down, also no travel on Saturday, Sunday or holidays. Three days at the Canadian line clearing customs turned out to be quite an ordeal.

Gene's other life is packing and big game hunting. As a youngster he rode with his father on pack trips into the Sierra Nevada mountains in California. On his arrival into Alberta he inquired about a big game license and was met with a blank stare. He was ahead of his time. Since then Gene has spent some time with saddle and pack horses on camping trips in the Rockies.

In 1942 Gene was in the Colonel Lane party which pioneered the route of the Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek to Fort Nelson. This was truly an exciting and historical venture.

Gerie is an ardent gardener and her flowers are a delight to see. They have one son Byron, married to Gloria Jean, only daughter of Tom and Lucy Williams. Byron operates the family farm and is a pipe line welder. Gloria Jean is a high school teacher and librarian. They have three boys — Jeffrey Leigh, Anthony Douglas and Barry Byron.



Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Davis and Smokey the dog in their garden.

The Wapiti Brown pack outfit — Gene Davis crossing the Wapiti river.



Gene Davis: a Sunday afternoon outing.

#### THOMAS DRIEDGER

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Driedger were born on the prairies, Tom near Herbert, Saskatchewan where his parents were farming in the Gouldtown area, and Eva, nee Schellenberg in Gretna, Manitoba. Her mother passed away when she was four, so she, with her dad and four brothers moved to Gouldtown, where her grandparents the Schellenbergs and the Hamms were living.

We were married in 1944 and farmed in the Gouldtown district for 10 years. Ronald Doyle was born in 1947 and Arlene Jeanette in 1949.

In the spring of 1954 we left family and friends and moved west to Fort McLeod, Alberta where we rented a farm for three years. Ron and Arlene both started school at Fort McLeod.

Because of blowing dust in the spring of 1956 we decided to make another move. Having relatives in the Peace River country we thought we might like it up here too.

Our first move was to Sexsmith in November of 1956 and we wish to pay tribute to uncle Barney and aunt Agnes Hamm and family who became so dear to us while there — Aunt Agnes was my teacher in Saskatchewan and she taught Arlene for a year in Sexsmith. We were farming east of Sexsmith.

In 1962 we bought land north and west of Beaverlodge, in the Gimle district. We are renting other land as well and have bought more since.

Ron had his high school training in Beaverlodge, plus a year at the Vocational school in Grande Prairie. After he finished school he has been helping with farming in summer and in winter he has been trucking for two winters working in the oil fields in northern Alber-



ta and the N.W.T. Then he went to lumber and log hauling. He has also been on gravel hauls.

Arlene also finished her schooling here, graduating in 1967. She then went for further training to the Peace River Bible Institute for two years and then to Briercrest Bible Institute for her last year, graduating in 1970. She enjoyed singing and found it very interesting touring across Canada with groups from the Bible Schools. In 1970 she went with the B.B.I. Chorale. They toured eastern Canada and parts of the United States. When in Ottawa they toured the Parliament buildings, and while there the Chorale sang, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Mr. Diefenbaker was one of the audience. He came to greet them and wished them God's blessing.

During the summer months Arlene helped as counsellor at Ness Lake Bible Camp, near Prince George. It was there that she found the man of her choice, Douglas Dickau and they were married in June of 1972. They are living in Prince George, B.C.

### THE FARNSWORTH STORY

Joe Farnsworth married Matilda (Tilly) Gammage in Huntsville, Ontario in 1910. Two children, Dan and Mary were born to them there. In 1913 they came to Acme, Alberta and rented a farm. There a third child, Bill, was born.

Joe still had an adventurous spirit and many people were coming to the Peace River district. In the summer of 1915, he filed on a homestead in the La Glace district and in January of 1916, the Farnsworths moved their family and belongings to their new home. They came by train to the end of steel, which at that time reached Watino.

Joe's mother brought the three children by stage via Spirit River. From there, Joe and Tilly drove a team and sleigh loaded with their belongings and feed for the stock. The temperature hovered around forty below. Many times they were forced to walk and lead the horses to keep from freezing.

There were many stopping places along the way. The straw bunks were often infested with lice. As feed was scarce someone had to be on guard so that the manager didn't take it and sell it to the next customer.

The Farnsworth family stayed with Ed Fowler until they could build a home on their own homestead. The Fowlers lived in a small sod-roofed shack. There, the Farnsworth's fourth child, Irene, was born. The Fowler land is now part of Bill Farnsworth's farm.

Olaf Stelid helped to build a log house on the homestead. Five other children, Tom, Douglas, Jean, Johnny and Lorna were born in this home. Mrs. Fred Webber, a close friend of the family was the only attendant. The tenth child, Dorothy Johanna, was born in the Sexsmith maternity home, operated for so many years by Johanna Haakstad.

In 1918 the flu struck. It is often recalled how parents fought to save the lives of their children. Many neighbours died, and as the disease was so contagious, families had to bury their own dead.

There were many good times in those days. The welcome mat was always out to friend or stranger. Many people would stop over at the Farnsworths on their way to the sawmills north of La Glace.



Joe Farnsworth's oxen — "Who needs a tractor?"



The Joe Farnsworth Family L-R: Johnny, Douglas, Dan, Bill and Tom, Lorna, Jean, Tilly, Mary, Dorothy, Irene.



Joe Farnsworth outfit breaking land at La Glace. Note the hitch—3 horses in lead, 1 horse in furrow, 3 oxen in rear.



The Joe Farnsworths and Mr. and Mrs. Rowland at the Farnsworth home built in 1945.



In 1939, the Farnsworths still had the homesteading spirit. Tilly filed on a homestead at Bay Tree and they moved there with the four youngest children. They left the farm at La Glace in care of Bill and Dan.

We recall many trips made with horses from La Glace through to Gordondale in the winter. The cabin belonging to Nels Anderson on the edge of Down Timber Lake was always a welcome sight at the end of a long cold drive. This cabin was about half way between the two homes so many weary and cold travellers found it a friendly spot to stay overnight.

Tom and Douglas joined the army and took a basic training in Grande Prairie. Tom went to Portage La Prairie and later to Europe for four years.

Life at Bay Tree for the Farnsworths was very interesting. The community was new and there were no schools nearby. Highway 49 was completed in the summer of 1940. The family farmed there till Joe passed away in 1949. Johnny continued to farm for several years. Then the farm was sold. Tilly lived in Gordondale till 1961, when she moved to Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River. She passed away in 1965.

The ten Farnsworth children are all living. Mary married William Van de Pol and Dan married Mildred Garberg in 1935 in a double ceremony at Clairmont. Mary and William had five children. William passed away in 1948. Mary makes her home with son John in Worsley. Seven children were born to Dan and Mildred. In 1954, Mildred passed away. Dan now makes his home in Beaverlodge.

Bill married Francis Potratz, and they had a family of eight. They live on the original family farm at La Glace. Irene became the wife of Fred Pillsworth and lives near the original family farm at Bay Tree. They had seven children.

Tom, married to Gladys Christianson, farms near Valhalla Centre. Tom and Gladys have six children. Douglas makes his home in Valhalla Centre as well.

Jean married Bob Cramer and they have five children. Bob has worked at the Research Station at Beaverlodge since 1959. Johnny was married to Janet Sutherland and they live in Gordondale. They have six children. Johnny has been employed by Can-Fina Oil Company since 1959. Lorna married Glen Rowland and they now have eleven children. They have lived at Pine Point, N.W.T. since 1968 and are now in the Grande Prairie district. Dorothy married Olaf Hegland and they farm west of Beaverlodge. They have a family of four.

#### THE GIMLE SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 3786

A meeting was held at Hans Hommy's place in the early spring of 1919 to organize a school district. Thus the Gimle school district was formed. Hans Hommy suggested the name, it was voted on and it carried, the school house was built on the corner of Jens Anderson's homestead.

Mrs. Kate Morgan was the first teacher and Mrs. Ada Rumele the second. These are some of the teachers that followed: Miss Green, Kathleen Robson, Judd Perry, Molly Steward, Miss A. Bolton, Vivian Hood, Elma Elkins, Kathleen Ross, Isabel Perry, Peggy Martin, Genevieve Hutson, Ada Fletcher, Mary Bauman, Mrs. Connie Kerr was the last teacher.



Pupils at the Gimle school, 1927.



The Gimle school.



A Sunday School picnic, 1955.



Gimle school. 1939.



The highlight of the year was the Christmas concert. They were always beautiful and everybody was happy and of course Santa Claus was there. The community lost something when the children had to be bussed into the larger schools.

The Gimle school house was a place of activity for years, that was before the Albright hall was built. It was used for dances, Literary society programs, box socials, pie socials, sale of handicrafts, made by member of the Riverside Ladies' and Red Cross.

A Literary society was organized. Many from the North Beaverlodge school district became interested and came regularly, so it was decided to have the programs every other time in the North Beaverlodge school.

There was an organized Lutheran congregation at Gimle, service for years in the old log school house. Rev. H. Ronning was the first pastor. The Methodist church had services there for several years. Mr. Lane and J. M. Murray were two of the ministers. Mr. Lane traveled on horseback. There were many babies baptized in the Gimle school house.

The first basket social was held in July, 1919, the proceeds were used to buy something for the school. Sam Larson bought the highest priced basket \$9.50. Some years later two young men bid on Kathleen Robson's basket, it was sold for \$17.

When World War II broke out six of the boys that had attended the little log school house joined up and served their country: Olaf Hegland, Garney Hommy, Sam and Robert Martin, Ralph and Henry Anderson; they all came back and are doing well.

Quite a few of the pupils that attended the Gimle school went on for further training. There are two teachers, a radio announcer, an electrician, a bank manager, two hairdressers, a minister, a journalist, and a worker in atomic research. There are also farmers, carpenters and other trades, one is a matron at Spirit River Senior Citizen Home.

During the depression years several country schools were closed, but Gimle never lost a day.



After the first church service, Lutheran, held in the Gimle school in the fall of 1939 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hans Hommy.

## OSCAR A. GUDLAUGSON

While I do not consider myself as an oldtimer in the Beaverlodge district, I am certainly an oldtimer in this Peace River country. My people, the M. G. Gudlaugsons, came from Winnipeg, over the long trail



Fern and Oscar Gudlaugson, Easter Sunday in their old log house with the sawdust walls.



Craig Gudlaugson with his 4-H Champion Calf.

by way of Athabasca, Grouard, Peace River Crossing and Dunvegan in 1911, to settle at Clairmont. I was one year old at that time, and had two sisters older than myself. Three brothers and one sister were born later, making us a family of seven.

My parents were both Icelandic. Dad's people had come to Canada from Iceland and settled at Gimli, Manitoba, when he was just three years old and mother emigrated to Winnipeg at the age of nineteen.

I got my education at various local schools, including Wellington No. 3636, which was first built on my father's farm, and moved to other locations twice in subsequent years. I attended the old two-storey, brick Montrose high school in Grande Prairie, and in the winter of 1927-28 got my diploma from the Vermilion School of Agriculture, taking the two-in-one course.

In the spring of 1925, A. R. Judson, District Agriculturist at Grande Prairie, organized what was to be the forerunner of the 4-H Clubs in this area. It was simply called a Pig Club and had members from all over the South Peace, which included my brother Len and me. At the show and judging competitions that fall, three fifteen year olds, Verne Johnson of Beaverlodge, Peter Cranston of Wembley, and I won





Oscar Gudlaugson in a happy mood, 1969.



Derril Gudlaugson age 8 — off to school on Inky in Clairmont.

top honors and were given a trip to the Provincial competitions in Edmonton. The top team of two at the Provincial competitions was eligible for a trip to the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, and Verne Johnson and I were fortunate in winning it. We were treated like royalty wherever we went, so it seemed to us, and it was quite an event in the lives of two boys who had never been out of the Peace River country. Also, we were headlined by the papers at home and honored at a banquet given for us by the Grande Prairie Board of Trade on our return. It was a bit of "advertising" for the Peace River country. Since those days of the Pig Club, the only time I have ever had pigs was to let the boys raise a couple of them one winter.

My generation was hard hit in the depression days of the "thirties". Having grown up and become of age in the early days when opportunities were limited, we then spent ten years of our young lives facing a depression, where opportunity just didn't seem to exist. I stayed on the farm with my father for a number of years, and we grew thousands of bushels of wheat every year, selling it as low as 20 cents a bushel. During the winters I worked on dairy farms, milking cows by hand, for my board and wages of from \$5 to \$15 a month. For two summers I was weed inspector for the Municipality of Bear Lake. Then in the fall of 1936 I got employment with the Alberta Wheat Pool as a helper in Elevator No. 1 at Sexsmith. The wages were \$50.00 per month. I had to board myself and sleep in the elevator office. Often there wasn't much sleep, as the elevators stayed open day and night during the harvest season. Some weeks I never took my boots off from Monday morning until Saturday night. At times we stayed open Sundays as well, but my boss, Frank Sumner, always gave me Sundays off.



Grandpa Magnus Gudlaugson and grandson Derril bringing in firewood.

In March of 1937 there was an opening for a buyer at Gage, a small point on the railway northwest of Fairview, where the Pool had built a new elevator. Because I was highly recommended by Frank, I got this job, the only opening available in the Peace River country. During two years at Gage, I succeeded in building up the business for the Wheat Pool, as well as making a host of friends in the area. During this time I also met and married Fern Evelyn Keillor, daughter of oldtimers of the Last Lake district, John and Mary Keillor. Fern was one of ten children. We were



married on November 11, 1938, "honeymooned" at the Armistice dance that night in Fairview, and I had to be up early next morning to load hogs and cattle, as I had also become shipper for the Livestock Co-op. We lived in two small rooms built onto the side of the elevator office, which were rather noisy when the engine was elevating grain.

In June, 1939, we moved to Rycroft where I bought grain for seven years. While there, we became deeply involved with church and community organizations. I was instrumental in having the village incorporated, and served on council until we left there in 1946. Also, our older son, Derril Wayne, was born there in 1941.

In the spring of 1946 we moved back to the old farm at Clairmont and had some difficult times during the seven years we spent there. Although the farm had never had frost or hail since my people had settled in 1911, our crops were frozen two years in succession, then hailed badly and we also experienced drought and snowed under conditions. However we "hung on", and got a toe hold back in farming. And we adopted our second son, Craig Leonard in 1948, a baby boy, 6 weeks old.

Meanwhile I was looking for a farm which we could afford to buy, as we had only been renting the five quarters at Clairmont. In the spring of 1951, we purchased the half section where we now reside, from the estate of Hugh Thompson in the Albright district. In 1956 I purchased a third quarter across the road, and that is my present holding. We farmed this place for two years from Clairmont, and moved here to live in the fall of 1952. With the help of a neighbor, and son Derril on his pony, we chased my small herd of beef cattle over the Emerson Trail, a two-day trip.

The old log house was not fit for habitation, so we built a frame addition to the small log house which Lawrence Thompson had moved into the yard some years before. This had sawdust plaster on the walls and needed quite a bit of renovation. However, we managed to make it cosy and comfortable, and lived in it for nine years before we built our present modern home. During those nine years Fern continued to patch and paint, keeping it so homelike that some of our friends, including the District Agriculturalist wondered why we wanted to build a new home.

There were still some difficult years ahead. The fall we moved here, foot and mouth disease was found in one community in Saskatchewan. The United States closed its borders to Canadian beef and the bottom dropped out of the market. For about seven years, I sold choice fed yearling beef for an average of 14 cents per pound. Some of those years I was unable to show any income; we lived off our land and on the depreciation of our machinery. Our earlier concern about the productivity of the gray wooded soil was unfounded, as with good management and farming practices, as well as cooperation from the weather we have been able to produce good yields of barley, oats, brome and fescue seed.

There were no telephones in the district, so one of our first undertakings was to help organize the Albright Telephone Mutual to get telephones into the community. Power also came at about the same time,

in 1954. Roads were not high graded or gravelled, and our trusty team of 'greys' pulled many a traveller through mud in summer and snow drifts in winter; as well as those who hit the ditch on the bends of the old road crossing the Beaverlodge river by my farm. I also hauled feed for the cattle with this team for many winters. And there was Inky, our black pony, bought for Derril when he started riding four miles to school at Clairmont, and for many years the pleasure of every child that came into our yard.

But times have changed now, to better roads, modern cars and tractors with snow plowing equipment. Fern and I have been active in farm, church and community throughout the years. This has afforded a variety of interests, and the making of many warm and lasting friendships. Among other things, I have been U.F.A. delegate for a total of 20 years, and Fern has held offices in the United Church at Presbytery and Conference levels.

Our boys are grown and married. Derril has been a teacher and librarian in a number of centres in B.C. and Ontario. He and his wife, Pat, a Hamilton girl, also a teacher, presently live in Richmond, B.C. where Derril is employed in the Vancouver School system; and Pat is at home raising our only grandchild, two year old Teddy. Craig and his wife, Marie, a Winnipeg girl, are living in Wembley and are employed in Grande Prairie.

During our lifetime this great country has developed from an untouched wilderness to a vast agricultural empire, with towns and cities, paved highways, oil and gas wells, pipelines and large forest industries. We look back and consider it a privilege not only to have seen much of it happen, but in a very small way, to have been a part of it too.

#### **WILLIAM HARRISON**

William Harrison homesteaded south of Wedell's in the early days and stayed to prove up. However, he was also a telegraph operator and at times would venture forth to Vancouver or other points, presumably to replenish his cash reserves.

Whatever his interest in farming, he had a compelling interest to fell trees, seemingly just for the fun of it. He had one problem though, a pesky woodpecker which would rat-a-tat on the tin chimney early in the morning, which would make further sleep for Bill impossible.

#### **REINHOLD HARTMAN**

Reinhold, usually known locally as John Hartman was born in the province of East Prussia, Germany, July 15, 1904. He came to Saskatoon in 1925 and worked on farms and in the city. In 1928 he came to Wembley and worked for Charlie Edgerton for the winter.

In 1929 he went to Montney and took a homestead. He came back to Beaverlodge and worked for Shortie Hotte for the summer.

John rented Cassity's farm and John Ehrensperger's farm in the spring of 1930. In 1935 he bought Ole Hegland's land — east ½ of 17-72-10-W6th and farmed this land for 38 years when it was sold to Ken Young.

A brother, Adolf Hartman came to Beaverlodge in 1928 and farmed with John till 1939. He went to Edmonton to work on the railroad.



Sister Martha came in 1951 and married Ted Harrop. They have a daughter, Ruth who has graduated from high school and is contemplating taking a dentistry course at the university.

Another brother Kurt came from West Germany in 1955 and lives in Grande Prairie. He works for Northern Alberta Dairy Pool.

John and Martha now live in retirement in Beaverlodge.

### THE OLAF HEGLAND STORY

I was born in Great Falls, Montana on September 14, 1923 and came to Beaverlodge with my parents in 1928. Due to my mother's ill health in 1928, I lived with Sam and Lena Larsen. After my mother's death, I continued to stay with them for a number of years. It was from the Larsen home I attended school at Gimle and appreciated very much their kindness toward me.

In 1941 I worked at the Dominion Experimental Farm. While there I purchased my first car from Jack Cox. It was a Model T Ford. The next day at noon hour, I took Henry Anderson for a ride to show him the operation of the car. All went well. Merv Jaque was next and of course I had to show him my driving skills. Incidentally, I had no safety sticker, driver's license, insurance or any of the requirements that are needed now to drive a car. As a matter of fact this was my first try at driving any car.

On the homestretch, I cramped the wheels a little too hard, and upset the car into a wheat plot. After work, Gordon Albright helped me get the car back on the road. I was plenty worried that this would be "it" for me as far as my job was concerned. I happened to look up and there stood Mr. Albright, my boss. All he said was "Ole I think you had better watch your driving from now on." What a relief!

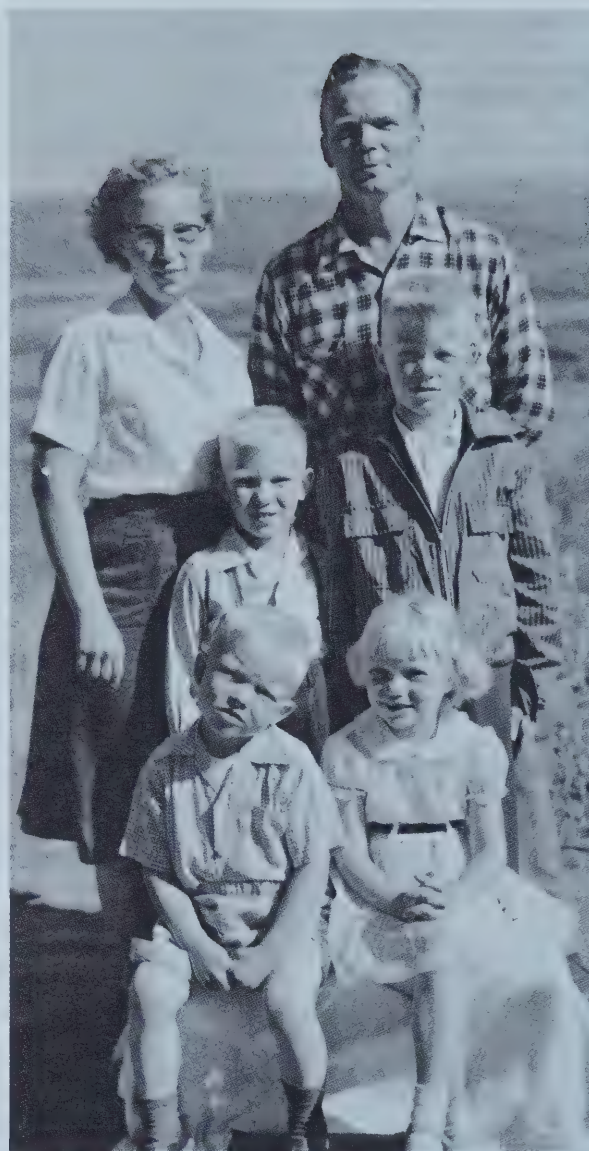
In January 1942 I joined the army in Grande Prairie. I saw some of World War II in Sicily, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. In November 1945 I was discharged at Calgary from the army and bought the Murdo Dewar farm SE 12-72-11-W6th. I still farm this land.

In 1947 I met Dorothy Farnsworth of Bay Tree and we were married in Dawson Creek on October 20, 1947. We farmed in the summers, and spent our first few winters in logging camps. These were good years. We made many good friends during the winters. Later, when our children went to school, Dorothy stayed on the farm while I worked on oil rigs and on construction jobs.

We have four children — David, Ivan, Marie and Mervyn. All completed their high school in Beaverlodge. After high school David went to Fairview Agricultural College where he graduated in June 1968. He married Janet Doerkson of Grande Prairie in May 1971. Janet is a lab and X-ray technician and has worked in the Beaverlodge hospital. They are now living in Grande Prairie where David is employed by North Canadian Forest Industries. Their son, Michael David was born in May 1974.

Ivan, after matriculation took two years at university in Business Administration and Commerce. He works for North Canadian Forest Industries.

Marie, after high school trained and graduated as a



The Olaf Hegland Family, Dorothy, Olaf, Ivan, David, Mervyn and Marie.

nurse from the Royal Alexandra hospital in Edmonton in June of 1973. She married Don Fletcher of Goodfare in September 1973.

Don is a welder for J & H Equipment in Beaverlodge and Marie works in the Beaverlodge hospital.

Mervyn matriculated and is now taking Civil Engineering Technology in Edmonton. He will graduate in May 1974 and will be employed by J. R. Payne Consulting Engineers of Grande Prairie.

I farm in the winter and have worked on oil rigs and for Canfor. I enjoy fishing when I have time. We support community activities. Dorothy has an excellent garden, is a fine seamstress, enjoys crafts, is working part time at the Hythe hospital and has strong church interests.

We both enjoy people.



The Ole Hegland Family, Annie, Margaret, Marie, Hilda, Mabel, Ole, Clifford and Olaf.

### OLE HEGLAND

Ole Hegland was born in Hjartdal, Tellemark, Norway in 1879. At the age of 21 years, with his brother Gilbert, he emigrated to Ramsey, North Dakota where Ole worked on a farm. In 1916 he married Marie Hoglund of Clearwater, Minnesota. They started their married life at Devil's Lake, North Dakota where Anna, their first child was born. In April 1917 Ole and Gilbert came north with Sam Larsen. They homesteaded northwest of Beaverlodge.

In July of that year Marie and daughter Anna joined them. They lived with Urgel Carrière until a house was built on the homestead. Three more daughters were born here — Margaret, Gunhild (now Hilda) and Mable. Marie was one of the charter members of the Riverside Ladies' Aid.

In June of 1923, Ole had a sale and sold all but the land to return to the United States. The family settled in Great Falls, Montana where Olaf and Carl were born.

Ole worked in a copper smelter, while Gilbert who had given up the homesteading idea went into the tailoring business in Great Falls.

In March of 1928 the family moved back to the homestead where George was born. As Marie's health was very poor, Mrs. Sam Larsen and Mrs. Jens Anderson helped to take care of the family. They also accompanied her to the Grande Prairie hospital where she passed away March 31, 1929.

The children were taken care of by the generous help of the neighbors. Margaret went to Mrs. Jens Anderson, Grandma, where she stayed for 24 years. Olaf was at Sam and Lena Larsen's for 8 or more years. Grandma Sylvester and daughter Mable cared for George. He was two weeks old when Mrs. Heglund passed away. Carl was at Mr. and Mrs. Halvor Royslands for a number of years. Annie, the oldest quit school to look after the other children.

In April 1935 the homestead was sold to Reinhold Hartman and a quarter was purchased four miles east of Beaverlodge, which in 1946 was sold to Taras Nychka. Again, another quarter, the Carrière place was purchased in 1948.

Ole took a trip back to his homeland in June of 1949

and upon returning lived on this farm till his passing in 1950 at the age of 71 years.

Annie married Hans Heuscher. They had four children, two girls and two boys. She is now Mrs. Frank Hemerle and lives west of Beaverlodge.

Margaret makes her home in Edmonton where she does secretarial work. Hilda married George Cox. They had four children and live in Edmonton. George Cox passed away in 1974. Mable married Jim Kimmerley of Grande Prairie. They had 5 children. Jim passed away in 1968. Mable now makes her home in New Westminster, B.C.

Olaf is married to Dorothy Farnsworth of Bay Tree and farms west of Beaverlodge. Carl lives in Chetwynd, B.C. George was married to Phylis Fleming in November 1973. They operate a shoe shine shop in New Westminster.



Art Lacey and Ole Hegland. The "Pause-that-Refreshes."

### OSBORNE HOGG

Osborne Lee Hogg was the fifth child of Colonel and Mary Hogg. He was born at Delburne, Alberta. The family moved to the Peace in 1921.

He went to school at Grande Prairie and Gimle. As a young man he enjoyed hunting and riding. He and his brothers were well known for their ability to ride bucking broncos and took many prizes at the local sports days.

He married Nancy Lettington in 1933 and they farmed in the Lymburn district for four years. Then they moved to Turner Valley where he worked as a "Cat" operator for oil companies.

They had seven children: Anne married Leo Kemery and lives in High River. Bill married Alix Rothwell and lives in Grande Prairie. Albert married Greta Lorimer and lives in Calgary. George died as a boy. Rose married Garth Koll and lives in the Beaverlodge area. Roy married Betty Rous and they live in Lethbridge. Rhonda married Ernie Yaskowich and they live in Calgary.

The family returned to the Peace in 1963, living at Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge.

Osborne died of a heart attack in 1970. Nancy makes her home in Beaverlodge.

### KITTLE HOMME

Kittle Homme was born in Satersdalen, Norway. He emigrated to the U.S.A. as a young man and



worked at different places there. He came to Canada in the spring of 1917, and homesteaded in the Gimle district. He lived on his homestead until he died in 1944. He never married.

#### OLAF HOMMY — by Dawn Snell

Although his name will not go down in history books nor his picture placed in halls of fame to me my father was a great man and together with many other brave and dedicated people made our beautiful Peace Country what it is today. He was a man with many dreams and brought to our simple home in the trees a little of the "so-called" out-side world, the world of which he had at one time been a part. He talked of this world and I know missed it, deep inside.

Our trees and yard were like the beautiful parks in California where he had once lived. His library would compare with that of a university professor and my fondest memory of him is father sitting in his rocker beside the stove reading Shakespeare, the Harvard Classics and very often the Bible. He loved people and conversation but because of his reading and depth of thought the neighbors found him hard to understand at times and so very often he was alone in his thoughts and ideas.

His psychic gift set him apart even more. I remember as a child how awed I was by his many true dreams and his power to read people. To me this was the greatest and most powerful man in the world and there was no problem he could not solve. I remember how gentle those rough hands were as he combed my long, tangled hair or held by head in the night to soothe an aching ear. I also remember his great strength and optimism when we lost crops worth thousands of dollars in a matter of minutes or hours through hail or frost. He would laugh to my sister and me, and say "well we'll try again next year." We immediately felt better and looked forward to that bright promising "next year."

Now as I look back I realize even more how strong and dedicated my father was. He loved his farm and the beautiful Peace River and in spite of heartaches and hardships he never lost sight of his dreams even to the time of his death. He was not the most popular man in the community, maybe because he was "his own man" but he was greatly respected for his life and his farming ability. He would die doing what he felt was right! He treated all men equal and could carry on a conversation with a King or President as easily as with a labourer. It was my father who taught me not to pay attention to people who laughed at my dreams because before anything became real in life it first had to be a dream in someone's mind and how true I have found that to be.

My mother, too, added something special to our home as she was very beautiful and as beautiful inside as out. She brought a touch of glamour and sophistication into my life and she shared my father's love for reading. She was a gifted speaker and writer but unfortunately she had problems with her health which was a tragedy because she had so much to give.

As a child of the community, born and raised in those pioneer days, I want to say thanks, first to my wonderful parents and then to all the wonderful peo-

ple who settled here from all over the world and every society and gave us the background of which I am very proud. Also for the beautiful land which these people carved from the wilderness so we may enjoy the life we live today.

#### SADIE HOMMY

Sadie Hommy is a member of the H.O. Hommy family of Albright and has retained her interest in the district. She trained as a stenographer and married Claude Taylor in 1931. Claude was from Stony Plain and was then a carpenter in Hythe. In 1952 the Taylors moved to Anchorage, where Claude worked on the Army Base. They are now retired.

Sadie sends her regards: "Dear Citizens of Beaverlodge."

Mother and father and six of us children came to the Beaverlodge district in 1916. The other three came in the spring. We loved every inch of that country and the fine friendly people there. Those first settlers of Beaverlodge held very high standards. We traded at Gaudin's Store, they always gave mother five cents a pound more for her good fresh butter. I worked for Mr. Albright at the Experimental Station for about three months. He was a very kind man, and he and father had many good visits. I boarded at Lossings and Lizzy really could cook and was a good friend. We loved to visit Mrs. Johnson and Pauline; you always came away feeling warm inside.

We enjoyed our farm, had several milk cows so we all helped to milk. We couldn't have had a better mother or father. They joined into our play, as we did with the work and that old farm rang with many peals of laughter and good times.

Once when mother and father drove in the old wagon to Beaverlodge, Johnny and Alex about 11 and 12 years thought they'd have a good time. There were no fences then and they got on a couple of cows to ride. The cattle went wild and took off across the river and down the old trail to Beaverlodge; the boys couldn't get off. They met mother and father on their way back home. Mother and father laughed so hard they couldn't punish the boys and it all went down in the book of memories.

Both my sisters were married in the little log house, Rev. Ronning always tied the knots good and strong.

Our family except Lena and Henry and I are resting



Sadie Hommy and sister Sigrid (Mrs. Andrew Johnson) on the way to the Riverside Ladies' Aid meeting.

now, in Gimle cemetery, except Sigrid who is in Sexsmith cemetery.

Father was a great community worker. He strived for the betterment of roads, bridges, and schools. We had wonderful neighbors in Gimle. My memories are sweet and wish you all well that I knew so long ago, mostly the second and third generation.

With a gentle and patient smile,  
She bestows her golden dreams,  
And from the halo round her head  
Still her purity it gleams

Never can you see such sunsets  
And such twilights long and grand.  
That's time for writing poems  
Stories for that lovely land.

Oh, how I love the north-west,  
I just long to be there now;  
I long to hear the Chinook roar,  
And to see the tall trees bow!

Yes, it is the most beautiful,  
That ever our eye can see,  
A country of hills and valleys,  
A place where I love to be.

Never can you see such rivers,  
That flow with such force and foam,  
And again go onward peaceful,  
No wonder we love our home!

I yearn to bend my knees and drink  
The clear water flowing free,  
In Beaverlodge, a mountain stream,  
Flowing onward to the sea.

Sadie Hommy

#### **WILLIAM HORN**

Rev. and Mrs. William Horn and son Paul came from Indiana, U.S.A. and filed on land in the Gimle school district and built a little log cabin there. Mr. Horn was a Methodist minister. He had a team of light weight horses and buggy in which he travelled to different places to preach. He had services at Molde, at Beaverlodge and West Hythe and other places. Mrs. Violet Greber was one of the babies he baptized at West Hythe. Mrs. Horn played the piano at different social doings if one was available. Mr. Horn taught school at Beaverlodge for a while. They went back to the U.S. in 1921. The Martins owned the land for awhile. Olaf Hegland has it now.

#### **MATT KAUPPIE — by Lena Larsen**

Matt Kauppie came from Finland. He had worked in eastern Canada before he came to the Albright district. Here he filed on a homestead and stayed until he proved it up, after which he returned to Ontario. Walter Kerr bought the land, and how that homestead is changed today! Both the railroad and the highway cross it. While he was here Matt Kauppie was very good at building with logs. I recall that he built a log house for Jack Chandler.

Of his original homestead, part of it is now owned by Avril and Peter Thompson, formerly of Wales, now teaching in the County of Grande Prairie.

#### **THE BILL MARTIN FAMILY**

Bill and Sarah Martin left Ireland on St. Patrick's Day, 1910 to come to Canada. Travelling with them were dad's parents, two sisters and a brother Sam. Their plans were to go to Toronto where they had relatives but instead they came to Russell, Manitoba. There they rented land and dad became interested in farming and in showing Clydesdale horses at fairs. On hearing about the west they decided to go to Alberta where they could homestead and start a farm of their own. With several head of stock and a great deal of courage, dad, mother and four children started their long journey to Alberta.

This trip proved to be very slow and complicated as at times freight trains would be so delayed that the animals had to be unloaded and food and water found until the freight could move again. With a very long delay between Edmonton and Grande Prairie as the tracks had been washed out by floods, this trip took several weeks.

While in Edmonton, dad had met Dr. Sproule who needed a family to live on his farm at Grande Prairie. Dad gladly accepted this offer and now had a place to which he could bring his family. This was the year ending World War I, 1918 and the winter of the terrible 'flu' which had hit almost everyone and so many lost their lives for lack of hospital and doctor's care. Anyone who hadn't the 'flu' helped to care for the sick.

In 1921 dad filed on a homestead six miles west of Beaverlodge. In those days prairie fires were a very common thing and the first set of logs that had been hauled out and ready to start building our home were completely destroyed by fire, so another set had to be cut and made ready with the help of our very willing neighbour, Murd Dewar. During this period we lived in temporary lodgings on the Watt farm, neighbours to Percy and Ernie Stephens with whom we have shared a life time of friendship. The Watt farm belongs to the Doug Youngs.

Our parents farmed and lived on this homestead land. Mother passed away in 1949 and later our brother John and his wife Patsy Meraw moved on the farm with dad, where they still live with their eight children, known for their singing voices and Irish songs. Their names are: Jack, Kathleen, Sadie, Mary Ellen, Patti, Colleen, Kenneth and Bernard. The eldest member of the Martin family is Jennie, Mrs. Peter McNaughton now living in Penticton, B.C. They have



The Bill Martin family home.





The John Martin family and Jack's wife, Karen.

two children, Jean and Bill. Next is Sadie, Mrs. Bill Baird who lives in Beaverlodge and has three children, Bill, Sid and John. After Sadie comes John. Bob and his wife Eleanor Loven live in Peace River and have four children, Robbie, Ricky, Neil and David. Sam and his wife Peggy Martin live in Beaverlodge and have six children, Geordie, Peter, Jamie, Doug, Janet and Sarah. Conley and his wife Arlene Christopherson live at Rio Grande and have three children, Diane, Heather and Roy. Lois married Tom Hill and now lives in Beaverlodge and they have three children, Tommy, Edna and Greg. Arthur and his wife Joyce Funnell live at Halcourt and have three children, Margaret Jean, Brian and Kathy.

We are now a clan of 32 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. We try to get together once a year to revive Irish songs and keep track of our relatives. Our dad passed away in 1962.

The memories of our parents are of admiration, warm love and respect, and we try to meet our problems with the examples they set for us.

Mention is made of the light-hearted singing of the Martin family. Singing was only one feature of the family as all the members have contributed to a feeling of optimism over the years regardless of the pressing affairs of the moment. At one concert in the Gimle school the Martin children contributed several numbers interspersed through the program, while on another occasion a concert was cancelled because of illness in the Martin family. At home a group would be singing on the slightest suggestion.

But singing was only one attribute. Their good nature and the care with which they could dismiss troublesome situations made life very much happier for the Martin family and their neighbours.

#### DAILY MATHEWS

Mr. and Mrs. Daily Mathews, their son Herbert, and daughter Mary came from Montana and filed on a homestead in the Gimle district. They started the Clearview post office, and also had a small store,

which was very convenient for the surrounding homesteaders.

They moved back to Montana in 1924. Albert Anderson owns that land now, and the original old log store is still standing.

#### THE MORGAN FAMILY — by Lena Larsen

Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Morgan came to Canada from Kansas in 1917 or 1918, and homesteaded west of Gimle School district. Mrs. Morgan, the first teacher at Gimle school, taught there from 1919 to 1922. They built a little log cabin on Henry Hommy's land across the road from the school and lived there during the school week. They had a son, named Kenneth. Mr. Morgan was a barber by trade but did not follow it while he was homesteading. He found homesteading rather hard as it was his first attempt at farming.

Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and Kenneth left Canada in the summer of 1922, and made their home in Longview, Washington. Kenneth became a musician and played in Jack Benny's band in Hollywood.

The Morgans corresponded with Mr. and Mrs. Hans Hommy for years. I remember Mrs. Morgan writing about going by plane to visit their son, "If the plane goes down, it is all right. We have lived a good life and long."

#### THE MORGENTJERNES

Mr. and Mrs. Morgenstjerne were usually referred to by the English translation of their name, Morningstar. Nobody seems to remember their first names.

They came from Norway and were well educated. Their two daughters attended the Gimle school, their son was too young. They bought Jorgen Johnson's and Albert Anderson's homesteads. The Riverbend golf course is on Jorgen Johnson's homestead.

There was a lot of good timber on their land and when someone wanted to buy it Mrs. Morgenstjerne said, "No, they would rather send home to Norway for money if they needed it that badly."

Their home featured antique furniture and family portraits which they had brought from Norway. The Norwegian Arctic explorer and naturalist, Fridtjof Nansen was Mrs. Morgenstjerne's uncle.

The Morgenstjernes never did adjust to this country. They stayed about three years then went to Vancouver and later returned to Norway. Maguar Rodset of Goodfare met them in Norway after their return and wrote to friends here that the oldest girl was going to school in Paris, France where they had relatives. He also sent a newspaper clipping and a picture of Mr. Morgenstjerne with a brief case standing in front of an office building in Oslo.

#### Footnote by Yvonne Gant

I have been asked to write about a gentleman from Norway, whom no one living remembers. His nickname was Morningstar, and I have never heard him called anything else.

I recall that when I was serving in the Albright Store, I met this gentleman in the spring of 1931 one cold day. He came into the house dressed in a buffalo coat and had a notion he wanted to dance. I was working for Mrs. A. R. Stevens and she wasn't in the mood but round and round the heater they went, fur coat and



all. Finally she told him to dance with me but as I was too shy he left very disappointed.

He seemed to belong to a rich family in Norway, maybe a "Lord" maybe not but close to it by the looks of his furniture which resembles that in a King's castle and by his courtly manners. He led the dances in Albright hall with much bowing and the gracious ways of the Court.

Morgenstjerne had a large house on the banks of the Beaverlodge river. The young people of the neighborhood were invited to a party there and I remember being astonished at the high, pointed red chairs, tapestry and other rich furnishings. We enjoyed the hospitality, and the boy who was to become my brother-in-law, Johnny Hommy took me home riding his grey horse, Violet. I had just recently come to the Peace River from the dried-out Prairies and I was astounded at the beauty of the night, one of those beautiful nights with the full moon riding high above the spruce. It is a night I never forgot.

Morningstar, out of the blue sky loaded up all his stuff, soon after this and left on the train, and this is all I remember except for the time my husband-to-be, Olaf Hommy, who was head of the Hall Board at that time, engaged in a tussle with him outside the hall. Such were the days of long ago, the golden years, the happy years. We look back with many fond memories of those who are no longer with us.

#### **TOLIEF OMLID**

Tolief Omlid was born in Satersdalen, Norway. He emigrated to Minnesota and worked for farmers there. Then he came to Canada in the spring of 1917 and filed on land in the Gimle school district. He died in 1935 and is buried in the Gimle cemetery. William Fair owns his land now.

#### **LEON PARRY**

Leon Parry was a Frenchman, born in Quebec. He was a cook by trade, an excellent one. He went overseas in World War I, serving as a cook. After the war he returned to his homestead on the banks of the Beaverlodge river. He died very suddenly at Hythe in 1929. Little else is known about him. Oscar Gudlaugson owns that land now.

#### **THE RIVERSIDE LADIES' AID — by Lena Larsen**

The Riverside Ladies' Aid was organized at the home of Mrs. Jens Anderson on March 5, 1919 as a Lutheran Ladies' Aid, as at that time there was a Lutheran congregation in Gimle. At the meeting were Mrs. Hans Hommy, Mrs. Ole Hegland, Mrs. Andrew Johnson, Mrs. Oscar Wedell, Mrs. Jorgen Johnson and Mrs. Jens Anderson. Mrs. Anderson was elected president, Mrs. Jorgen Johnson vice-president and Mrs. Andrew Johnson secretary-treasurer. All the charter members have now passed to their reward.

Two years later it was changed to a Community Ladies' Aid as many ladies from both sides of the river were interested in joining, and there was no other organization for women. The largest membership was in 1928 and '29. It would take too much space to name all the members who have belonged over the years.

The Riverside Ladies' Aid has worked to support good causes all through the years. Donations were

given to the Cancer fund, mental health, C.N.I.B., Heart Fund, Polio Fund, Red Shield, Red Cross, Hythe and Beaverlodge hospitals and other causes. Three years ago we purchased a wheel chair for the Red Cross. The list could go on and on.

We have not forgotten our own community. We have worked to improve the Albright Hall with benches and tables; before the days of electricity we helped to raise money to buy gas lamps. Our last big project was to paint the inside of the hall and called on the men to help. We also did things for Gimle and North Beaverlodge schools. I remember when we made the first stage curtains of unbleached cotton. Mrs. Jens Anderson and Mrs. Bill Fair helped sew them at Mrs. Larsons. Those curtains were used in both schools for years. While there were still little country schools at North Beaverlodge and Gimle, we gave money for Christmas treats for the children. Later when the schools were closed we decided to give the money to Sunday schools of each church represented in the group, the United Church, Alliance, Anglican and Catholic churches. It has always done my heart good that we could work together like that.

The Aid sponsored sewing demonstrations by a staff member of the Olds Agriculture school and many of us took our sewing machines for the 3-day course. We also had demonstrations in interior decorating, making fancy sandwiches and cake decorating, as well as many other things.

We earned money by catering to weddings, banquets and the big event, the Annual Thanksgiving Supper in connection with a bazaar. There have been many willing workers and they have done such beautiful handwork, crocheting, knitting, embroidery and other handicrafts. Some of our work has gone to many of the states in U.S.A., also to Norway, England and even to China. Mr. Chandler of Beaverlodge had a brother from China visiting him one year and he bought some of our work to take back with him.

Another project was our Daffodil Teas, held in the Albright Hall. We had a very good turnout for that. We had spent hours making paper daffodils for table decorations and for sale.

The Riverside Ladies' Aid celebrated their fiftieth anniversary on March 5, 1969. The Busy Bees W.I. catered for this occasion, serving a lovely supper and presenting a nice program in the Homestead Hall. It was a time of wonderful fellowship.

We meet the first Wednesday of the month. We open our meetings with a hymn and we usually have a good roll-call which creates interest. There is always some business to attend to, then we close with the Lord's Prayer and enjoy a social time over our cups of tea or coffee.

I joined the Aid in April 1921 and have been a member ever since. I don't know how many terms I have served as president. I have always enjoyed working with all those wonderful members past and present.

The Riverside Ladies' Aid is still going strong. Mrs. Clarence Nelson is serving her third term as president. Mrs. Geo. Anderson is secretary-treasurer and has served a long time. Both these ladies have done a wonderful job.



I would like to pay tribute to each member who has worked for the Ladies' Aid. Some have knitted, sewed even spun yarn from the raw wool. Some have excelled in decorating the tables and fixing up the platters so beautifully for weddings and banquets.

Mrs. Chris Sylvester tells the story in verse:

Will you listen dear friends? I've a story to tell  
Of the Riverside Ladies' Aid,  
Of the brave pioneers who organized  
And foundations deeply laid.

"'Twas the 5th of March in 1919,  
Six fine women met  
At the home of Mrs. Jens Anderson  
Their hearts were on business set.  
A Ladies' Aid they would organize  
'Twould be a great boon you see  
Much good in the community they could do  
And 'twould be pleasant socially".

Mrs. Anderson was the president  
And so is first in view  
Mrs. Andrew Johnson was secretary  
And acted as Treasurer too.

Their laws were few and simple  
But they had one common goal  
To do all the good they possibly could  
And work for the mission at home.

Their membership soon increased  
And folks from the East and West  
Gathered each month in someone's home  
Each a welcome guest.

A suitable name for the Aid was needed  
But 'twasn't hard to decide  
From both sides of the stream folks came  
So they called it "Riverside".

The first Wednesday of each month we meet  
In the hall or someone's home.  
Much business often keeps us late  
We enjoy it just the same.

The need has been great and the calls have been many  
For assistance this past year  
From those who were sick or in need of clothes  
Or in need of a word of cheer.

We've not forgotten the hospitals  
Our own and another outside  
So children could sing and be glad and rejoice  
Some hymn books were supplied.

And so it continues the whole year through  
The need grows more intense  
We carefully study each case in hand  
For we must not waste a cent.

Oh, it's grand to help your fellow man  
Along life's roughened road  
It's grand to feel that you've indeed  
Given him a lift with his load.

#### THE CHRIS SYLVESTER FAMILY — by Ruth Throness

It was a hot July afternoon. The air was still and heavy with the scent of wild flowers and grasses. Flies kept up a steady hum over the horses' backs and the

light buggy jolted over the ruts along the narrow road from the railway's end at Wembley to Beaverlodge. The pretty young bride, her face swollen from the determined mosquitoes, clung grimly to the narrow seat and wondered what was ahead.

The couple was Gladys and Chris Sylvester. The year was 1927. They began their life together on the 12th of July that year, joined in marriage in the Salvation Army Citadel in Calgary.

Chris Sylvester, then 31 years old was one of seven children born to Anne and Solfest Sylvester at Crookston, Minnesota. In 1902, the family moved to Canada to what was then part of the North West Territories. They arrived at a railway stop marked Crossfield and began their battle to claim a living from the virgin prairie.

It was a stern struggle, eventually claiming the four elder sons of the Sylvester family, leaving only Chris and his sisters Ida, now Mrs. Tom Tompson of Drumheller and Mabel, now Mrs. Chris Overn, of Lethbridge.

Gladys Loughton was born in Birmingham, England, in 1906 and came to Canada with her family in 1910, to live in Calgary.

She was a teacher all her life starting at 12 in the Salvation Army Sunday School in Calgary. All who came in contact with her learned from her. In 1924 she earned her teacher's certificate from Calgary Normal School, and the same year, at the age of 18, she was assigned to teach the Verdant Valley School near Delia. There she boarded with the Sylvesters.

Prairie drought had not been kind to the pioneer settlers there so the Sylvesters made their decision to move to that great new region just opening up in the north, the Peace River Country.

Soon a small, sod-roofed log cabin a few miles west of Beaverlodge, at Gimle was home for the young couple and the elder Sylvesters. Still a teacher at heart, and a firm Bible believer it was not long before the young pioneer wife and others, especially her close friend and neighbour, Mrs. Sam Larsen, had organized regular Sunday Bible studies, often in the Sylvester and Larsen homes.

Spring brought a new joy to the tiny cabin. They named her Ellen. A sister, Ruth and brothers Melvin and Donald joined her. Today, Ellen, Mrs. Augie Gravengard lives in Vancouver. Ruth, Mrs. Oswald Throness lives near Sexsmith. Melvin and his wife, Marion live in Hamilton, Ontario where he is district superintendent of the Alliance Church. Donald and his wife Ingrid live in Edmonton. Donald is publisher of Business Life magazine.

Thirteen grandchildren knew and loved their grandpa and grandma Sylvester.

Life was not always kind to Gladys and Chris Sylvester but no circumstance, no matter how trying ever caused their faith to waver. From their home near Albright they travelled faithfully to church services at Hythe, where they were charter members of the Alliance Church. They also took a keen interest in the fledgling Peace River Bible Institute in Sexsmith. Mr. Sylvester was a charter member of the P.R.B.I. school board and served faithfully until his death. He

was also a charter member of the local Gideon Camp and participated regularly in Bible distribution through schools, hospitals and hotels.

In 1943, when they left their farm and moved to Beaverlodge to take over the Maple Leaf Oil Agency and to permit the older children to attend high school, they transferred their membership and were faithful stewards, teachers and workers in the Beaverlodge Alliance Church for nearly 30 years.

When the last of the children reached high school Mrs. Sylvester returned to teaching.

To their family, their friends, their associates and to virtually everyone who ever met them, the Sylvesters were known for their faith, their kindness, their honesty and their generosity.

In the 10 years Chris Sylvester ran the Maple Leaf Oil Agency, he earned the respect of every customer he served. They knew that if Chris said he brought a hundred gallons, he probably brought a hundred and one. He was a never failing rock at the head of his family, in his church, in his business and in the community.

On July 21, 1969 Chris and Gladys Sylvester went to be with the Lord. They went suddenly, unexpectedly. It was, by human terms a tragic accident. But in eternal terms, it simply opened the door to heaven. They entered together when a fast-moving freight train crashed into their pickup camper unit at a level crossing near Lethbridge. It was as though God said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servants, enter thou into the joys of the Lord." They were laid to rest in the Gimle cemetery.

#### **SOLFEST SYLVESTER FAMILY — by Mable Sylvester Overn**

Solfest Sylvester was born in Wisconsin in 1857. He moved with his parents to Thompson, N. Dakota, then to Crookston, Minnesota, where he was engaged in business. There he met Anne Martha Valor, who was born in Bardo, Norway, coming to the U.S.A. at the age of 23. They were married in April 1886.

Six sons and two daughters were born to them, the eldest passed away in infancy. The parents and seven children emigrated to Crossfield, Alberta in 1902 where they homesteaded and farmed for eight years. Later they moved to Verdant Valley near Drumheller and there two sons passed away.

In April 1927 Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester, their youngest son Chris and daughter Mabel moved to the Gimle district. They bought land from Oscar Anderson and from Carl Johnson. Daughter Ida and son Ebert did not come north.

The Sylvesters celebrated their Golden Anniversary while living in the Gimle district. Solfest passed away in 1940 and Anne in 1944. Both are laid to rest in the Gimle cemetery.

Mabel, the youngest of the family married Chris Overn in 1931. Chris Overn was born in North Dakota. He came to Wetaskiwin, Alberta as a young man and homesteaded in the Gimle district in 1928. Two children blessed the Overn home. Daughter Stella, Mrs. Dan Friesen of Drumheller, now has four children. Son David was adopted in 1945. He is married and farms near Lethbridge. They have three children.

Mabel and Chris Overn lived in the Gimle district the first years of their married life. Later they bought a farm near Beaverlodge where they farmed for a time. A few years later they left and moved to Nobelford, Alberta where Chris worked for Charles S. Nobel. They are now retired and live in Lethbridge.



First Golden Wedding Anniversary in the Gimle District. Mr. and Mrs. Solfest Sylvester, April, 1935.

#### **DUNCAN THOMPSON**

Duncan Thompson was born in Scotland. He served in World War I and was badly shell shocked. He emigrated to Nevada and worked in a mine there. He came to the Peace country about 1919 and filed on a homestead 7 miles west of Beaverlodge. When he had proved up he moved back to Nevada, and again went mining. A few years later he passed away. He never married. Chris Hommy bought the land.

#### **THE HUGH B. THOMPSON STORY — by Frank Thompson**

"What manner of men are these who leave the predictable comforts of civilization to accept the challenge of survival on the periphery of an unknown land".

Hugh B. Thompson and his father, Frank Henry Thompson, crossed the Athabasca River on the Edson Trail en route to the Peace River country in August of 1913. Both were descendants of David Thompson whom history describes as "a Scottish gentleman employed by the Plymouth Company of London, England, who organized the fabled 1620 voyage of the Mayflower which brought Captain Miles Standish and the other Pilgrims to that tenacious New World bastion called Plymouth Rock on the coast of Massachusetts, U.S.A." David Thompson, his wife Amyas and young son John joined the growing but struggling colony in



The Hugh Thompson Family, Frank and Hugh, Edith, Evelyn, and Laurence.



1623. Amyas Thompson was the first white woman to set foot in what is now the state of New Hampshire. Twelve generations later Hugh B. Thompson, one of five children, was born to Frank Henry and Anna Thompson in Fairmont, Minnesota. The family moved west to Reardan, Washington, where some farming opportunity was said to exist. It was there that Anna Thompson died in 1903. The agricultural opportunity proved to be beyond the means of a harried father of five - three of whom were sons eager for independence.

“ . . . the northern ‘Voice’; the Canadian Government brochure released world-wide . . . ‘land, land’ . . . available land . . . ‘an extension of Canada’s fertile belt’ . . . distant, venturesome, inviting . . . but most of all, available . . . ”

The temperature was in the 80’s and mosquitoes clouded the sky as the wagons and horse-outfits of Hugh Thompson and his father moved over the Edson Trail in the late summer of 1913. Both homesteaded in the Bezanson District. In 1914 Frank Thompson abandoned his first homestead and took another in the Dimsdale area. He later sold out and moved to Boise, Idaho, U.S.A., where he passed away in 1932.

Myriad buffalo herds once roamed the long glacier-carved valley that had become Hugh Thompson’s new home. Long before he arrived it was called Buffalo Prairie. But as the 20th century dawned, it was referred to and mapped as the Grande Prairie. The pivot-town, now a city, is called Grande Prairie.

Hugh Thompson became known throughout the new land as a horseman par excellence; an exacting, successful farmer; a man of straight furrows and fence lines; an energetic participant in community affairs; a new citizen whose immense charm was occasionally matched by his ire.

Hugh’s youngest brother, Rowe, traversed the Edson Trail in 1914. Brother Ashley and family arrived by railroad in 1917. The years proved all three Thompson brothers worthy stewards of the land and equal to the rigors of the time.

In 1918 Hugh Thompson married Edith Crill of Dimsdale, who had been widowed three years earlier. The daughter of her first marriage, Evelyn, was then two years old. A son, Lawrence, was born to Hugh and Edith Thompson in 1919. About this time Hugh Thompson and family moved from Bezanson to Dimsdale where they lived until 1927. A second son, Frank, was born in 1926.

In 1927 Hugh Thompson bought land formerly owned by Jack Johnson along the banks of the Beaverlodge River, six miles northwest of the town of Beaverlodge, and a mile west of the community called Albright. Evelyn and Lawrence attended the Gimle school. Evelyn’s propensity for outside as well as indoor duties was of immeasurable assistance in the evolution of progress on the home place. Hugh had, in 1926, developed a nine-horse equalizing hitch. Lawrence responded by becoming the Peace River country’s youngest nine-horse-hitch teamster at the age of seventeen. Lawrence, at seven years, helped a hired man named Bare-foot Smith haul spruce logs

from a tall grove across the river to give the log house a second story under a raised roof.

During his first years in the Peace River country, Hugh Thompson, driving a bull-team, broke some of the land on an eastern-facing slope west of Saskatoon Mountain. That was part of the beginning of the Beaverlodge Experimental Station which proved so vital to the entire “extension of the Canadian fertile belt.”

Because of ill health, Edith Thompson was not so well known as was her husband. But those who were able to become closely acquainted with her were quick to attest to her warmth, her love, her humanity. Hugh Thompson was constantly seen in the judges’ stands at the summer-time stampedes throughout the district. He attended countless auction sales in association with his friend, auctioneer Miller Patterson of Hythe. The family never knew what Hugh would bring home — household utensils, furniture, farm tools, implements, clothing, gadgets. But clearly Hugh’s greatest avocation was horse-trading. No one is able to estimate the extent to which his assets increased as the result of that activity.

Fine horses were as much a part of the river farm as the tall red and white barn they occupied, or the sprawling pasture below over which they coursed. Hugh Thompson acquired several quarters of land, including a second homestead northwest of Beaverlodge — but the farm by the river was the base of the operation. It was the family home.

“ . . . the snow; the wind; the sawed and burning wood; the fragrant fuel; the high white drifts of Christmas; the tree from the rivered, pastured land; that hidden, hoping spruce; that rich green tree draped with Eaton’s best . . . splendor seen thru youthful eyes . . . ”

Evelyn attended the Hythe Happy Valley High School. She married Bruce Robertson March 21, 1935. Their home is the original Robertson homestead near Hythe. They raised four children — Robert, Grace, Ross, and D’Arcy. (See Early Pioneers, Hythe District, for the Robertson story.)

Lawrence participated in the highway construction effort into the Monkman Pass in 1938 when Peace River residents became impatient over the road-blocks to Government-sponsored construction of a coast outlet — and decided to do it themselves. The Monkman Pass route didn’t go through — but it provides the exclusive route for many travelers who drive in to see the thunder and feel the spray of the spectacular Kinuseo Falls. Lawrence married Marguerite Eastman November 16, 1940. Their home since 1952, has been the Dimsdale land from which Hugh and Edith and family moved to the Beaverlodge area in 1927. Lawrence and Marguerite also have four children — Neil, David, Iris and Diane.

Frank attended Beaverlodge High School. He rode the six miles each way on a succession of fine horses provided by his father. Frank started in radio in 1945 at CFGP, Grande Prairie. He is now News-Director of the leading radio station in Seattle, Washington — KJR. He has one child, a daughter, Evalyn (Lyn).

In 1943 Hugh and Edith Thompson moved to

Ladner, B.C. where Hugh supervised a government riding academy at Boundary Bay.

In 1946 Hugh and Edith returned to the land they loved the most — the Grande Prairie. It had been over thirty years since they'd helped settle it but the familiar places and most of the familiar faces were still there. The land they embraced — embraced them and it was a renewed love affair that would never end.

Hugh died in 1951. Edith passed away in 1962. "... so goes the rush of work and time; the harrowing heat; the lower than low degrees during winter's whirling white; the music of bells on horses' backs; the twilights; the endlessly shifting northern lights ..."

A marble stone ornately carved marks their resting place in the country which they and others brought to fruition. The remarkable land where they loved — and were loved. The incomparable Peace River Country.

"... so comes the Extended Night ... the Hallowed Light ... beyond the not-so-distant stars ..."

Fern and Oscar Gudlaugson now farm the Hugh Thompson place.

### THE HENRY TRAEGER STORY

My parents and I came from Berlin, Germany. My dad was here a year ahead of me and already had a homestead in the southwest corner of Goodfare. Soon we had built a house and a barn and then my mother came over.

The summer of 1928 I worked out in Rio Grande for \$2.00 a day on a farm digging out stamps. It was backbreaking labor for 10 long hours a day. In the fall I went out with a team and rack and got on a threshing crew. Not knowing how to load a bundle rack I lost half of the loads going to the machine and worked twice as hard as any of the others. Not being used to that type of work, my wrists swelled up and I soon had to give up threshing for that year. We depended so much on that money.

In the winter I went to a logging camp at \$30. a month. These were the days of the double deck bunkhouses and all one slept on was some hay gathered in the barn. It was not long before I contacted a skin disease which was easy to get under these filthy conditions. That was the end of my logging job and it took some weeks to get well again. By that time I had enough of logging camps.

Next year my dad injured his foot while we were skidding trees to clear land. Mr. McFadzen, who owned one of the few cars in the district, was kind enough to drive him to Beaverlodge to see a doctor. He was very rough, pulling and kneading my dad's foot which caused a lot of pain. Then he told him that it was nothing and it would be better in a few weeks. Well my dad waited for a long time and the foot never did get better. Finally he went to the Grande Prairie Hospital and x-ray revealed that the bones were broken. Since he had no money they let him lie in bed for 6 weeks before they finally operated. For 6 weeks they argued as to who was going to pay for it. By that time the bones had healed the wrong way so they had to be broken again and then reset. Afterwards dad received bills from the hospital asking him to pay and they became ever more threatening, threatening him with dire consequences. He just did not have the money. I

learned later that this inhuman treatment was not exceptional.

By that time we were deep in the depression. Dad had the mail contract between Goodfare and Windsor Creek P.O. That little money helped us very much. Beside that my dad was a good gardener and always had a good garden, enough to keep us in food. For entertainment there were all kinds of parties and during the winter months there were the many dances. St. Georges Ranch was always good for a dance or two and Fred McFadzen was a good caller. Noteworthy was the hospitality of our good friends and neighbors, Mrs. Wright and her daughter, also Mr. Mansel Hanna who could sing funny songs and play the fiddle. We had many entertaining evenings together. In 1942 I married Signie Wedell from Albright and together we moved to British Columbia. In 1944 I was in the army until the end of the war. We brought up five children of our own and we are now retired living in Agassiz, B.C.

### JAMES WATT

James Watt came in about 1912 over the Edson Trail. He bought four quarters — Sec. 8-70-10 which was South African Scrip. He enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915 and was killed in action. While in camp in England he exchanged letters with his Beaverlodge neighbor, John Dewar with whom he had left his camera when he enlisted.

James was a good piper and the Dewars and Mackintoshes were often reminded of the Scottish Highlands when they heard the skirl of James' pipes on a quiet summer morning.

Douglas Young now farms the Watt section.

### THE FRED WILSON STORY — by Eleanor Wilson

Fred's father came to Fort Macleod in 1874 with the NWMP. After a few years at Fort Mcleod he left the Police Force and homesteaded a ranch at Pincher Creek. Here Fred was born. We met here and were married in 1928.

After renting land for five years we moved to the Peace River country, attracted by the offers of free land. With our daughters Patricia and Anne we homesteaded on a quarter of land in the Crooked Creek district, east of the Smoky River. Our three sons, Robert, James and David were born here.

After 11 years of farming this homestead, we realized that if our children were to obtain an education we must move away. In the fall of 1943 we bought the Bisbing half section, moving there in the spring of 1944. My first trip to Beaverlodge came in the fall of 1944 when we went to locate a boarding place for Patricia for she was about to take Grade 10. That journey was a bit unusual since we drove with the team to Albright, left the team there in the barn beside the hall and finished our journey by train. In the evening we reversed the procedure.

Our negotiations for a boarding place were a failure. Board in Beaverlodge at that time was \$30.00 a month and as my take home pay as a teacher was only \$85.00 a month we decided to send Pat to the newly-opened dormitory in Grande Prairie. The fee there was only \$15.00 a month. She was followed there in due course by Anne, Bob and Jim. By the time David



reached Grade 10 there was a bus by the door taking him to Beaverlodge school. With Pat a teacher, Anne a nurse, and each son in an electrical career, we feel that our move was a wise one.

Over the years we have had considerable contact with Beaverlodge. We made friends in the church, Fred has been a representative of our district on the hospital board, and I have made a number of friends in the craft club. Now we are on the verge of retirement and feel we will enjoy living in what we have found to be a pleasant little town.

#### REMEMBER?

Remember the summer when the neighbor family had a luscious crop of raspberries yet did not pick

more than enough for their table and certainly did not invite the neighbors to pick.

Such inhospitality could not go unchallenged so one morning there were signs posted:

"RASPBERRY PICKING" on the highway.

"THIS WAY TO THE RASPBERRY PATCH" at the gate.

"STOP AT THE HOUSE FOR A BUCKET" at the house.

"PICK ALL YOU CAN USE", at the patch.

"STOP IN FOR COFFEE," at the house on the way out.

The family was enraged at such violation of the privacy and made an official complaint but Constable Jack Light, R.C.M.P. failed to find the culprits.





# HALCOURT

HALCOURT — by Rita Dalglish

The Halcourt district is rolling parkland that lies south and west of Beaverlodge. From the summit of the Halcourt hill a panorama of unsurpassed scenic beauty spreads across fertile fields and river valleys to the Rockies which are clearly visible most of the time.

Jim Cory was the first known settler in the district — squatting along the Red Willow river in 1908, on land which later was designated a school section so he moved to S.W. 7-71-10. In 1909 Sam McNaught squatted across the Beaverlodge on a gentle eastern slope but when his choice also turned out to be a school section he moved to the Halcourt hill further west. Here he built his log cabin straddling the line fence so that both quarters could be proved up at once.

Then Sam McNaught brought his family here. With the coming of his wife Elizabeth, daughter Mary and son Crosbie there came also a beginning of the idealism and culture that has long been characteristic of Halcourt's personality. From then on, as each new settler arrived his talents were utilized to create in the district one of the major cultural centres of the early days. Early pioneers will recall how the Sam McNaughts, the Funnells, the Clelands, the Longsons, the Laings, the Kennys, the Chapmans, the Charlie MacNaughts, the Hubert Blacks, Tom Williams, Nell Walker and Mrs. Gaunt, to mention only a few, gave of their time and talents to provide outstanding concerts, literary club meetings, dramatic productions and help in arts and crafts — even the delightful lawn parties with which the Charles MacNaughts entertained gave a taste of elegance and propriety that was hard to find elsewhere in the early rough and rugged pioneer days.

When asked about the people of those early days old-timers reminisced and we have these impressions:

Mrs. Sam McNaught was a qualified music teacher who gave generously of her talent and time to help with music in the school and in the community. Earl Jones was always available for dances which he "livened up" with his banjo.

The Funnell brothers brought excellent qualifications in the musical field too. Art had sung in a London choir as a boy and was always in demand for solo and choir work. Tom was a pianist and singer. He played for church services often and still plays for the funeral chapel in Grande Prairie. An excellent actor, he was also interested in drama. Bert played the piano too and helped with church services and school concerts. Later he formed a dance orchestra with Herb and Jean O'Brien and Tom Williams — and perhaps others too. Kathleen Funnell was a gay out-going, hospitable person who did much to make Halcourt a jolly social centre. She was fond of basketball, tennis, badminton and curling and shared her enthusiasms generously.

The Foyes and Dixons added considerably to the quality of the entertainment of the early days. Mrs. Florence Foy was a music teacher and elocutionist and had taught in Nanaimo, B.C. before her marriage. Ellsworth Foy and Fred Dixon were highly qualified teachers as well as fluent, witty speakers and debaters. Fred could take both the negative and the affirmative side of a debate and argue it with equal conviction. Mrs. Foy trained her daughters, Helen to be a singer and Mona an elocutionist who delighted the community with her readings.

The Rays were also a musical family. Alex Ray played the violin and could hand it to almost any member of the family when he and his wife were called on to do a step dance such as the Red River Jig



or the Highland Fling. He also taught his children gymnastic acrobatics with which they entertained at concerts.

The Cleland family came in 1913 and they were active in all community affairs helping in church, sports and social life. Especially remembered are the house parties they held which featured parlour games from Ontario. These were called "Methodist Dances" because the Methodists approved of this type of entertainment. The dances were done to singing or by "calling off". They were somewhat similar to quadrilles but no partners or pairing off was part of the dance. The Sir Roger De Coverly dance is one that was well-liked.

Harry Walker was an excellent violinist, with a fine violin. He played for dances for years. The Harry Walker family inherited a musical background from both their father Harry and their mother, Hazel Chapman. The Chapmans were all musically talented and loved the community activities. Arthur Chapman in his quiet way used his skills to create the first basketball nets, experimented with tanning and did some beautiful deer and moose hides and even devised a wind charger for electric lights.

Andy and Jim Laing are remembered for their bagpipes and "Harry Lauder" renditions.

Margaret McNaught of the Appleton district taught at Halcourt and brought with her an interest in dramatics — instigating and acting in many productions. Besides this Margaret had acquired for herself an enviable reputation of "Where Margaret is there's good, clean fun". Mothers were more apt to let their youthful daughters go to events if Margaret was going to be there.

The Foys, Dixons, Laings and Rays were most hospitable people, opening their homes for all church and social events that did much to bring the early homesteaders together.

As early as 1910 the first concern of these people was to have a place of worship to sing praises to their God.

The need for a cemetery became apparent when some early settlers buried their loved ones on their own land or along the river bank. A spruce tree usually marked the spot.

A meeting was held in the Halcourt church on April 24, 1922 and a cemetery board was appointed: Theodore Cleland, Thomas Cotton, William Dorin, Bertha Chambers and T. G. Irwin. Rev. Finlay, Theodore Cleland and Dan Bailey toured the district to obtain a suitable site. Half a mile south of Halcourt church land was purchased from G. B. Litster on the N.W. corner of his farm. Rev. Finlay who had some knowledge of surveying donated his services. Theodore Cleland became the first caretaker. Dan Bailey was the first to be buried there. More land was obtained from Russell Walker along the north side of the original cemetery.

In recent years the County has taken over the title and after 26 years, Ben Cleland, who had been caretaker since the death of his father, retired to Kelowna, B.C. The present caretaker is Bill Dahl. Cemetery bees are held each year.

Many have remarked on the beautiful view from

the Halcourt cemetery. The Red Willow valley with the blue Rockies in the background make a wonderful picture.

"As they rest in that peaceful hillside,  
With the Rockies standing by,  
They have joined the Mighty Hunter  
By the campfire in the sky."

— Pearl Cook



The first bridge over the Red Willow river.



The Halcourt Badminton Club and visitors.



The first school house at Halcourt.





Halcourt pupils 1958.



Halcourt School, Mrs. Ruth Conley and Miss Gladys Anderson, teachers, 1951.



The pupils under Miss Helen Bacon, 1937.



The opening of the Orange Lodge Hall, Halcourt.

And while the spiritual needs of the community were being taken care of we have the first school classes beginning in 1912 in the church building under Miss Marion McNaught. The first trustees were Joe Bateman, Harry Walker and Sam McNaught. Ted and Rhea Chambers, Quincy, Fred and Stanley Lewis, Betty, Mary and Crosbie McNaught and Ivy Chapman were pupils. After some months a log school and a log barn were built across the road from the church on the northeast corner of what is now Harold Hauger's land. Mr. E. Foy taught this school for several years. Among the pupils attending were Ted and Rhea Chambers, the three Lewis boys, Rhoda Hoover, Agnes Waldo, Earl Wallace and Violet Sanderson, Mary and Crosbie McNaught and Rita Cleland.

In about 1917 the log school was moved to Halcourt corner on two acres of land belonging to Ben Dahl. T. G. Irwin taught grades nine and ten to several students as well as the regular grades. Mrs. Harry Davis and Miss Edna Small followed as teachers. The log school continued in use until 1939 when a lumber building was constructed.

According to secretary-treasurer Elmer Dahl, the expenses in the early days were greater than income due to low prices for farm produce. Arrears in the teacher's salary had to be paid before current expenses. An arrangement was made to suit the times — the teacher was to be paid \$650 per annum. If the price of wheat rose to 80 cents per bushel her salary was to be raised to \$850.

After 1945 the Municipal School District acquired the Orangeman's Hall for school classes. A bad fire was averted when a bottle of gasoline was broken in the porch of the hall after school hours. The school door was kept tightly closed until all signs of the fumes had dissipated. On exceptionally cold days, although classes were held, the few pupils that dared brave the cold drew their benches closely around the big barrel stove for comfort.

In 1950 the Appleton school building was moved to



Halcourt to accommodate an increasing number of pupils. When smaller schools around Halcourt were phased out and pupils were bussed into Halcourt, a two-roomed school became a necessity. The hall was pressed into use.

Other teachers were: Miss Isabel McNaught, Miss Kay Chuckaluk, Miss Helen Bacon, Miss Pearl Wakefield, Miss Edna Keough, Mr. Joe Sauder, Mr. August Stolee, Mr. Frank Toews, Mrs. C. Dalgleish, Mrs. G. Conley, Miss Anderson, Miss Probst, Miss Dever, Miss Hughston and Miss Stephens. During 1953/54 Mrs. C. Dalgleish taught the last classes held at Halcourt, grades one to nine. Dick McGuffin was a long-time bus driver for the Halcourt pupils when they were vanned to Beaverlodge.

The Halcourt post office was first established in the home of Thomas Metcalf in 1912. Later Theodore Cleland became postmaster. Art Funnell carried on the post office in his store for 33 years. The hamlet of Halcourt that started to take shape when the school and church were built, grew with the addition of Frank Keasis' blacksmith shop in 1922. That year Art Funnell constructed a small lumber building just north of the store for the nurse's residence. He also moved his own log house and store from his homestead to a location east of Keasis' blacksmith shop. In 1924 the Orangemen of Halcourt and surrounding communities formed a Lodge and built a hall at Halcourt that soon became a community hall used for public meetings, concerts, dances, political meetings and the special oyster stew suppers that the Orangemen arranged for themselves.

In 1925 Miss Olive Watherston arranged for Halcourt tennis enthusiasts to go to Lake Saskatoon. Dr. A. M. Carlisle played for "The Lake" and other good players there were Mr. and Mrs. Yeats and Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Rogers. In 1927 a Tennis Club was organized at Halcourt and a court was constructed by scraping away the top soil and stapling tapes to the sub-soil. The membership fee was \$2.00 per annum and this included the use of club racquets and balls. Ed Barrett was so enthusiastic that he rode horseback from his home on the Wapiti to play tennis and take part in the activities of the Literary Society. Hubert Black was considered Halcourt's ace player. Horseshoe pitching became popular about this time and tournaments were held with Wembley and Elmworth.

A Literary Society was formed by the local people and provided many pleasant evenings with music,

drama and debates. Old-timers recall Rev. Kettly coming into the Appleton district and wanting to form an Epworth League, a type of literary society. Art Chapman felt it was his duty to inform the minister that he ought to tread lightly in that area as there was already a similar group organized at Halcourt.

In 1929 Jesse Luxemburg of Grande Prairie took over as the new blacksmith and moved into the community with his family.

In 1930 a new frame store was built. As Arthur Funnell was handling lumber from a number of sawmills operating south of the Wapiti it became possible to purchase lumber at the store. The sawmills were operated by Cook and Hagen, Riley and Alvie Elliott, Chase, Sanderson, Dupuis, Williamson and others.

A year or two later the community purchased a piece of land on the north side of the Red Willow river, being part of the Greig Estate and comprising 7½ acres, about two miles south of Halcourt. This became the Halcourt picnic sports ground and proved a boon and a blessing to the whole neighbourhood. Later it was much improved by plowing and levelling. Grass was sown and a softball diamond marked out. A refreshment booth was also erected. At the hamlet T. East built a house and barn to accommodate farmers hauling grain to railroad; Halcourt made a good half-way house where a man could put up his team and get a meal. Over the years several people provided meals, including Tom and Alma Kinsman. Later Peter McNaughton purchased their building and moved it to his farm west of Halcourt. Lloyd East installed a butcher shop. Tom Williams, on the store staff, married Lucy Leckie and erected a house and barn on the east side of the school grounds. He later returned to farming and sold the buildings to Bob McKay, who started a trucking business.

In 1920 the first district nurse, Miss Lemoine O'Neill arrived and was stationed at the Charles McNaught home. After Miss O'Neill married Walter Funnell in 1922, Nurse Olive Watherston succeeded her, living at first in the Appleton district. Later in the year she moved to Halcourt and stayed until 1925. Then Miss Ethel Bastin followed in 1927. All the nurses were kept thoroughly busy riding about the countryside going from school to school. They checked pupils' eyes, ears, throats and noses. They examined their scalps, measured them, and told some unfortunate ones the dire effects of biting their fingernails! Notes were sent home to parents about the state of their children's health, some remedies were suggested when feasible and a feeling of security and well-being permeated the neighbourhood when the district nurse had been around.

The Curling Club was organized at a community meeting and a building started in 1938. There were only two local men who had previously curled — Andy Laing and Clarence Holmes and they instructed the rest of the community. Early curlers included Andy Laing, Clarence Holmes, Hugh Gingles, Archie Smith, Jim Green, Art Funnell, Hubert Black, Otto Holter, Tom Funnell, Jim and Harold Howarth, Elmer and Ben Dahl, Bob McKay. Ladies took part in the mixed bonspiels. The Halcourt Bonspiels became famous for their "spiked coffee". Curlers will remember how the



Grain hauling.





Halcourt Picnic at School

roof leaked whenever the snow melted. Gas lamps all down the ice provided lighting. This entailed quite a lot of filling and pumping.

Now more than half a century later we find the same inherent attributes leading the district in culture and organization. Mary McNaught, a pupil in the first Halcourt school has guided many a young pianist through the intricacies of Chopin and Mozart, Betty McNaught has become almost an institution unto herself with her unique paintings, and pupils clamouring for her help in their efforts to attain some degree of perfection in the art world. Teachers, nurses, doctors, technicians, newspaper people and craftsmen have materialized in the off-spring of those early pioneers who held staunchly to their ideals and standards. Some of the same people guide and direct the district still through leadership in arts and crafts and organizations such as I.O.D.E., the Farmers' organizations, the Anglican and United Church groups. Children and grandchildren are putting down roots and raising families in the tradition of their forefathers. They have kept the faith that surmounts difficulties and have kept that "good part" which makes life meaningful and worthwhile.

#### **WILLIAM ALEXANDER**

The Alexander family came to the Rycroft district in March, 1911 after a month of travel over the winter trail from Edmonton. Bill had finished public school in Edmonton so had no school to attend here. Their mother died in 1916.

Bill and his brother Ed then left for the war. While on leave in Scotland, their Uncle Jim wanted to keep the boys there, send them to college and turn the Alexander estate over to them. Bill and Ed dreamed of bigger estates here.

They returned in 1919 to find that their father had sold the home place and planned to move to Bear Flats, west of Fort St. John. He and Ed soon moved again for Fort Smith where dad was killed in a logging accident in 1928. Bill, however left Bear Flats and

returned to Rycroft to farm. There he was very active in the community. He was a member of the council from 1922 to 1929 and was as always a good neighbour and generous friend.

His sister Jean was now Mrs. Herb O'Brien. When Herb died in 1935 they asked Bill to come and manage the farm. Although Bill had wanted Jean and family to move to his place at Rycroft he accepted the responsibility of the farm at Appleton. In 1943 Jean and family moved to Grande Prairie and the farm was eventually sold.

Bill married Ida Walker of Halcourt and for a few years they farmed in this area. Finally they made their headquarters on the Harry Walker land in the Halcourt district.

Although his health was failing his neighbours often appreciated his efficient help and cheerful company. In 1968 Bill died in the Beaverlodge hospital. His wife Ida has a position at Fort Saskatchewan.

#### **HARRY BABETT**

Harry Babett came from the United States in 1919. He was a trapper and lived on what is presently the Harry Howatt farm. Having no family, he left his land to Clarence Hagen. He died in the 1950's and was buried in the Halcourt cemetery.

Harry Babbit at Shettler's meadows.





## HUBERT BLACK

Hubert Black was born in 1886 at Fergus, Ontario. He received his early education there and later attended Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He graduated in 1910 with a B.A. in languages, and taught one summer school session in Saskatchewan. The next three years were spent in and around the logging camps on the British Columbia coast.

His brother, Harry, then persuaded him to go to the Peace River country and help him break a homestead. They purchased a team of oxen, a wagon and supplies in Edson, and started north in the fall of 1913. The going was slow and difficult, and when they reached a lake near the Tony River they decided Hubert should stay and trap the area, while Harry pressed on to Grande Prairie to file on the homestead. Both men kept Journals of their experiences on the Trail. Following are excerpts of Hubert's story:

November 16th, 1913. This morning I am ready to start. I will take my blankets, five biscuits, a chunk of salt pork, a quart or so of beans, a little tea and sugar, besides the axe and rifle, a few cooking utensils, and about two dozen traps. This is a big load to carry eight or ten miles, but I have a fair trail all the way. The only drawback now is the weather. It snowed a couple of inches last night and hasn't stopped yet. However, I will go as far as 3-Mile Lake anyhow, and if it is snowing much then, will come back for the time being.

This is evening of the same day and there is now more than six inches of snow over everything. Needless to say I am still at the shack. Just before I started this morning it commenced to snow in earnest, and when I went out I could hardly see across the lake, thick heavy wet snow that stuck to everything and piled up with fearful rapidity. I was soon convinced of the folly of going on with such a load, not only from the difficulty of walking and of making a habitable shelter when I got there, but what was worse was the danger of losing my way on a trail hard to find even when the ground was bare and now almost obliterated. Besides it might keep on snowing for days. So much against the grain and cursing the perversity of things, I abandoned the project till a more favourable opportunity!

December 25th. Christmas Day. The weather was as sharp as ever. Having no one to celebrate with I did nothing to commemorate the day unless the eating of a huge supper could be called such. I found the 4 traps at 3-Mile still doing surprisingly well, yielding 3 rats. For the first time since my last lynx catch I saw a lynx track today. I was glad to see it, they are not all dead yet.

December 31st, 1913. I cleared the traps off my 4-House route on my way home. As though in protest at being removed my old reliable mink-set had another. This was a complete surprise to me as I had thought the mink were dead and done with. He was a beauty — the largest yet. I saw a lynx track again along the creek which also goes to prove that one should not jump to hasty conclusions as to the quantity of game in the neighbourhood.

The catch for December is: rats — 59, weasels — 9, mink — 1, lynx — 1.

The two brothers remained in the shack and trapped the area until spring when they went on

together to Grande Prairie. There they sold their furs and bought fresh oxen and seed and proceeded to their homesteads in what is now the Halcourt district. They built a shack on the banks of the Red Willow river and began clearing and breaking the land. Shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914, Hubert, Harry and Gordon Moyer, a neighbour from across the river, walked 40 miles to Grande Prairie to enlist. The recruiting board accepted Harry, turned down Hubert for being too slender, and turned down Gordon Moyer, for having flat feet which was ironic since he had just walked 40 miles to get there. Hubert was accepted into the army later in the war and went overseas.

Harry was gassed severely during the war and died in a Calgary hospital in 1923 at the age of 32. Hubert was wounded and spent some months in hospital in England. After his discharge he returned to the Peace River and the homestead. During the next ten years he farmed the half section, and built a two-storey log house. In 1929 Hubert returned to Fergus and married Emma Mills who worked as a postal clerk there. They returned to Halcourt where they had two children, Margaret and Norman. The family lived on the farm until 1945 when they moved to Aldergrove in the Fraser Valley of B.C. Hubert died in 1968 at the age of 81. Emma is now living in Vancouver.

## THE STEVE BLANCHARD FAMILY

Steve and Lizzie Blanchard were married in Grande Prairie August 14, 1928 and had a homestead directly south of the Angus Campbells. They came from Miami, Manitoba and were close friends of the Campbells who had also lived at Miami several years before.

Steve worked for several farmers including the Joe Moores near Wembley, the S. McNaughts and Elmer Dahls at Halcourt. Many times he walked home the ten miles on Saturday nights and left at three o'clock Monday morning to be back at work on the farm in the early morning.

Steve was entitled to another quarter of land as he had spent four years overseas in the First World War 1914-1918. In 1930 their house, with the help of their good neighbours, was moved to this quarter directly south of the Albert Kennedys. With a few added logs they had an upstairs!

When alone Lizzie was frightened of bears so at nights took the axe upstairs, also the ladder which was used instead of stairs. A porcupine was the only animal that really frightened her as it left quills in her dogs nose when the dogs went to chase it away.

Three of their children were born during the five years they were in the district. Hazel, in 1931 and the twins, Roy and Elmer, in July 1933.

In the fall of 1933 they decided to return to Miami, Manitoba where two more daughters were born, Shirley and Elaine. As the years went by they moved to Carman, Manitoba. Hazel was a teacher and is Mrs. A. Skelton, Calgary, Alberta. Elmer is married to a Detective Sergeant in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Roy is married, working in Canada Packers for the past 22 years in Winnipeg. Shirley is a nurse, is Mrs. E. Nyrose, Calgary. Elaine, Mrs. J. Vandermeulin, works in the Bank of Commerce at Carman.



Steve passed away November 12, 1970 after many years of ill health. He and his wife were caretakers at the Legion Lodge at Carman where Lizzie now resides. At the present time (July 2, 1974) after being away 41 years, Lizzie along with Mrs. Lena Campbell, are enjoying a goodly number of visits in Beaverlodge, Grande Prairie and Halcourt district with former friends of the homesteading days. She tells us she would not have missed the homesteading days for anything as you learned the true value of things you acquired in later years and also made lasting friends.

#### THE EDWARD BRESSLER FAMILY

Edward Bressler was born, at Woodrow, Saskatchewan in September, 1915. He was the oldest of a family of seven. His parents were farmers. His boyhood was spent in the area between Assiniboia and Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan, where the depression and the "dirty thirties" hit the hardest. Toward the end of this period he and his brother went to Timmins, Ontario to work in the gold mines there. While there Ed met several Peace Riverites; Sam Dunbar, Orville and Bessie Hamilton, and Frank and Hazel O'Connell. In 1941, Ed and Sam went to Sudbury to the nickel mines, and later joined the services. Ed was not sent overseas.

In 1944, he unknowingly took his first step toward this country. During a leave in Toronto he met Dorothy Purves, formerly of Halcourt. They were married in April 1945.

After the war was over, they spent a summer at home at Mazenod, Saskatchewan. Then it was back to Timmins for the winter. However, in the spring the Prairies were calling, so they came back to Mazenod. After a year of unprofitable farming, they rented Mr. Frank Brewer's farm at Elmworth. That was the year of the "big snow" and when they arrived in Beaverlodge on March 22, 1947, it was thawing and there was water everywhere. The roads were impassable. Baby Allen was just five months old. They were met by sister Jean and Billy Thompson with a team and sleigh. They floated part of the way home.

In November of that year, Christine was born and in July, 1949, David arrived. They farmed there for three years, then moved to Alf Perdue's farm at Two Rivers for a year. The next winter Ed ran a Cat, striping coal on the banks of the Red Willow river.

In the spring of 1951, the Bresslers went back to Mazenod and Ed worked in a garage. In October they went to Toronto, but the pastures did not turn out to be greener. Ed took a course and became a welder with the Massey Harris Co. There, in November, 1951, Diane joined the family.

1953 saw the Bresslers back on a farm at Mazenod, where they lived for five years. In September 1956, Rosemary was born. The next year Ed bought a farm 20 miles south of Moose Jaw, and spent 10 years there. With much hard work and some good years, things were improving. In May 1959, Pauline was born; and in April 1960, Grace completed the family. In 1967, Ed sold the farm to an incoming colony of Hutterites. They went out to Kamloops, B.C. and lived there for four years where Ed worked first as an electrician and then as a mechanic. During this time Allen got

married in Regina, where he was working as a mechanic, and Chris began teaching school in Vernon. She was married in December, 1968, but was later divorced. David entered U.B.C. and later Diane went to Vancouver to work.

Again the country called, and early in 1971 the Bresslers moved. They bought Tom Hill's farm at Halcourt. Allen and his family also moved to Beaverlodge, and then to Halcourt. In 1971, Diane was married in Vancouver, and now lives in Duncan, B.C. In the spring of 1972, David got his degree in computer science. In December of that year, he married Pamela Willis. They live in Beaverlodge. He is employed by Proctor and Gamble. After high school, Rosemary joined Chris in Port Alberni to find employment. Besides farming, Ed has worked for Canfor for two winters.

Through all this moving about, Dorothy said she felt like a gypsy. She liked a pleasant home, so she "dug-in" wherever she was to make improvements in the house — only to leave it for someone else to enjoy. She has been a Sunday School teacher for over 20 years in the Lutheran Church and superintendent of Sunday School at times. The war work she did in Edmonton and Toronto before her marriage was exchanged for Home and School efforts, Lutheran Ladies' Aid, working and the school library and bowling in Kamloops.

Now she has turned her sewing hobby into a more profitable business by teaching sewing classes and sewing for those less talented than herself.

#### THE HARRY BROWN FAMILY — by Bessie Blask

Dad was born in Bristol, England and mother in Kentucky, U.S.A. They were married in Minot, North Dakota in 1908 and moved to Edmonton, Alberta, where dad had a shooting gallery and pool room before moving to the Peace River.

Dad walked into the country over the Edson Trail in company with Alec and Bill Thompson and some others in 1915 to file on the homestead. Later the family arrived on the first train to come to Grande Prairie from Edmonton. There was a large family of us, five girls and three boys: Grace, Bessie, Roy, Gilbert, Maurice, Ruth, Ida and Hazel. Times were hard in the early days and we all shared hardships as well as good times.

Roy and Maurice enlisted in the second World War, and in October 14, 1944, our world fell apart with the sad news that Maurice had been killed in action in Holland. He had been with the South Saskatchewan Regiment. He rests in the beautiful Canadian cemetery at Berg-on-Zoom, Holland. Sisters Ruth and Bessie have had the opportunity to visit his grave.

The family home was later sold to Tom Hatton and our parents moved to Manning where they lived until 1960, when they moved to Vancouver. Father passed away in May 1962 and Mother in July 1968.

The surviving children are scattered in various parts: Grace at Beaverlodge, Bessie at Chilliwack, B.C., Roy at Parksville on Vancouver Island, Ruth and Hazel at Vancouver, and Ida and Gilbert at Manning, Alberta.

#### JOSHUA AND JEWEL BROWN — by Helen Ray

Joshua and Jewel Brown and their four daughters



came to Loughheed, Alberta, Canada in 1916 from Bridgeport, Washington, U.S.A. Their daughters were Dorothy, now Mrs. James Liddell of Ponoka; Grace, now Mrs. Ernest McDermott of Alliance; Mildred, deceased, Mrs. Raymond McDermott of Alliance; and Helen, now Mrs. William (Scotty) Ray, Beaverlodge.

They had planned to come to the Peace River country at that time, but settled on a farm at Loughheed, Alberta for five years. For the next few years they farmed in the Alliance district. In April of 1927, dad moved to Beaverlodge and homesteaded in the Appleton district. Mother and I followed on New Year's Eve of 1928.

After a few years on the homestead, dad sold it and bought the Adolph Dalstrom farm, a short distance from the homestead. Being a blacksmith by trade since he was 17 years of age, he did a great deal of work besides his farming. This trade he learned on Yonge Street, Toronto.

During his earlier years, he blacksmithed in Winnipeg, Great Falls, Montana and Butte, Montana at the Anaconda Mines and Bridgeport, Washington.

They lived on the farm till dad passed away in November, 1946. Mother moved her house to Beaverlodge in 1948 and lived there till her passing in May of 1953. There are 18 grandchildren.

Joshua and Jewel are now at rest in the Halcourt district cemetery.



Joshua and Jewel Brown.

### THE GEORGE BULL FAMILY

George William Bull sometimes referred to as "Shorty" was born in Hamilton, Ontario in 1893. He came west via the Edson Trail to homestead in the Rio Grande area in 1913.

He labored over the clearing and breaking of his land until World War I brought an interruption. George enlisted in the army in Edmonton serving in the P.P.C.L.I. and saw action in England and France. At

the end of the war he returned to his small farm in 1919.

Minnie Bull (nee Mayer) was born in Austria in 1902 and came to Stony Plain in 1908 and to Wembley in 1926 where she met George. They were married the following year in April.

A 12 x 12 granary served as their first home. Later they were able to build a larger house which was needed to hold all the children which came with the years.

The Bulls had ten children in all. One daughter, Ruby, was lost in her second year. The other children grew, were schooled and eventually scattered to make their own homes — Margaret in Calgary, George Jr. in Sunset Prairie, B.C., Emma, John and Norman in Dawson Creek, Fred in Prince George, Dorothy and Patricia in Edmonton and Lillian in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. There are now 22 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

George supplemented his farm income by operating a small truck between Rio Grande, Halcourt and Beaverlodge. He was a congenial man and made friends easily. He passed away in Edmonton in 1962 at the age of 69 and was laid to rest in the small cemetery on Halcourt hill beside his small daughter. His wife Minnie reluctantly left the farm the following year to make her home in Edmonton where she now resides.

### GEORGE AND VIC BURT

George Burt and his son, Vic, came from Missouri in 1910 to the Halcourt District and filed on the south half of 5-71-W6.

George stayed on the homestead and Vic went back to Edmonton. In 1912, Vic walked back in over the Edson Trail with Elmer and Ben Dahl.

In 1928, George passed away. It was about this time that Vic's cousin, Earl Smyser, came to visit. He convinced Vic to sell both quarters. In 1930, Vic returned and bought the S.W. 5-71-10 back from Ed Williamson. He lived there until 1952.

In 1932 Vic bought a log house, built in 1919, from Ben and Elmer Dahl and moved it onto the farm. He lived in this house until he sold the farm. He hauled water from the Red Willow river for many years and finally had a well drilled in 1948.

Vic liked to play baseball. He was a really good pitcher and played with Ralph Carrell and other old timers.

Vic was a bachelor. He passed away in 1960 and is buried in the Halcourt Cemetery.

### WESLEY AND AMANDA CAGE — By Anna Dahl

In 1912 dad and mother sold most of their land at Three Hills, Alberta and took their family to Australia, hoping to find land for themselves and sons. Dad was disappointed with property there and returned that same year. In 1913 Jim, a son came north to see what the land was like and in 1914 dad traded the rest of his land for horses, one being a pure-bred Clydesdale stallion and on July 1st, 1914 we started for the Peace River country.

Covered wagons held all of the household effects as well as chickens, turkeys and a parrot.

There was a Chinese fellow, Din Num who wanted





Presentation of bouquet to Mrs. P. W. Cage. The Province of Alberta Jubilee celebration. Red Willow Park 1955.



Mrs. Cage and sons, Randolph, Lawrence, Jim, Frank and Earl.

to come to the Grande Prairie country and said he would do the cooking if he could come with us. I can't remember him doing any cooking. I don't believe he had ever camped out before.

When we got to Edmonton, I remember dad asking permission to take the 30 head of loose horses through the city. We had to wait until after midnight and someone guided us through. I also remember people opening their windows and asking us where we were going and the Chinese fellow answering, "Go to Peace Libba, go to Peace Libba."

As I remember our trip was very pleasant until we got to Edson and turned north. The muddy roads were a real nightmare. The men would have to build corduroy road over the muskeg and mud. Some days we could almost see the last camp site from the next one.

Dad had gotten mother a parrot when we were in Australia and his cage was fastened to something quite high on the wagon. When we would start into a very rough and muddy section of the road, mother would say, "Hang on kids!" The bird soon learned what she



Amanda and Wesley Cage in Edmonton.



Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Cage at Earl's homestead, 1917.

said and when his cage began to swing he'd scream, "Hang on kids!"

We caught up to three men whose horses had played out. They had only one wagon so dad lent them a team and drove the loose horses. But it was just that many more for mother to cook for.

The cow was milking that summer and when we camped at noon the men would take their cups to the cow and milk enough for their tea or coffee — that way the milk was always fresh.



I also remember that feed for the chickens and turkeys got low, so when we camped for noon or night we would let the poultry out to scratch for what they could find and when we wanted them into their crates we would put grain in the crates and call them. Very soon we could just open the crates and call, "Chick, chick," and they would all come.

We arrived at the Fred Frewer farm by Cut Bank Lake on Thanksgiving Day after more than three months on the trail. Fred Frewer wanted to join the army so dad rented his farm.

A Mr. Callison gave Earl a brown bear cub, which we kept until the 66th Battalion left for overseas. The bear went along as mascot. We heard he was quite a pet until he wanted to hibernate. He got so cross he had to be destroyed.

Frank, Laurence and I went to school at the little Cut Bank Lake school. Randolph wasn't old enough to attend school then. Jim and Earl had filed on land in the Rio Grande district. In 1916 dad, Jim and Earl built a house, barn, etc. on Earl's land. In the spring of 1917 dad moved his family there.

Earl joined the army in the early spring of 1918 and dad continued to clear and farm Earl's land.

In 1921 dad rented Mr. Stalberg's farm now owned by Scotty Ray. In 1926 he had built a house, barn, granaries and chicken house on his own land just north of the Stalberg farm and moved there. Laurence now owns and lives on dad's old farm.

In 1939 dad and mother went back to Missouri, U.S.A. to visit relatives and friends they had not seen for over 40 years. In 1941 they celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

Elmer and I retired from our farm and built our home in Beaverlodge in 1951. Mother and dad came too and rented a small house just near where I could keep an eye on them and look after their needs. Dad passed away in February 1953 at the age of 82 years, 9 months. Jim bought a small house and moved it to our back yard where I could care for mother and let her have her own home. After a few years she wanted more room so we moved the house to Jim's lot just across the street from us and added a bedroom and porch.

Mother lived there until 1959 when she left to spend the winter with her daughter, Mrs. Frank Callison in Fort St. John. She passed away in the Fort St. John hospital in April 1959 at the age of 86 years and nine months. They had celebrated their 61st Wedding Anniversary and would have celebrated their 62nd one month after dad passed away.

#### **AUSTIN M. CAMPBELL**

Just west of Rays and Laings on the Rio Grande road there used to be a comfortable frame house overlooking the Halcourt valley. This was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Austin Campbell of Iowa, U.S.A. who homesteaded there in 1916. After a few years in the community Mrs. Campbell died and Austin sold out and returned to Iowa.

#### **BURR CHAPMAN**

Burr Chapman, of English descent, was born in Wisconsin. He moved to a dairy farm in California and thence to Beaverlodge in 1910. In 1914 he returned to

California. His wife, Alma Eleanor Rowley, of Scottish descent, was born in Iowa.

One son, Arthur, born in Iowa, homesteaded immediately west of the Neil Harris farm. He retired to Osoyoos, then moved to Knot Hill, near Salmon Arm, and died in 1962. Myrtle was married in California before the family came to the Peace.

Hazel, Walter and Ivy were born in California. Hazel married Harry Walker and now lives in Michigan. Walter homesteaded east of the Clelands and left for Kelowna during the Depression. Ivy, the youngest, returned with her mother to California. While still here, she is remembered as a member of the Appleton Girls' Basketball team. She is now married and lives in Eureka, California.

Walt and Art filed on homesteads in the Gordondale district when it was being opened up. The soil was badly burned and crops were disappointing until the district started to grow alsike clover for seed. Now the district is flourishing.

About the time the Chapmans arrived, Eugene Probst had also come in and was looking for land. So one afternoon he struck out on a trail south of Ernie Dixons and while still in the midst of willow bush was amazed to hear laughter and piano music. Obviously this was intriguing so Gene advanced cautiously, to come upon the wedding of Harry Walker to Hazel Chapman. The Chapman piano was the first one in the Halcourt district and had been brought in over the Edson Trail.

#### **THE STORY OF CLARENCE AND HAZEL CHRISTOPHERSON — by Phyl Sherk**

It was the spring of 1939 when Clarence Christopherson moved with his family from Valhalla to the Halcourt area. There he farmed on the SE 35-70-11-6, formerly owned by Joe Archer and farmed by Fred Miller for seven years. The move was made by teams and wagons and included his famed threshing machine. With this piece of equipment he averaged 20 days of threshing a year — for himself and his neighbors. Amid the hard work and long hours of eight teams, two spike pitchers and the machine men there were many hours of fellowship and good natured and sometimes not so good natured jibing. The ladies were a very important part too for those meals were something to behold and will long be remembered.

Clarence was not to stay here long, as had been the story of his life before he reached Halcourt. As a young man, born in Nacoma, North Dakota he was raised on a farm near Cadillac, Saskatchewan. He spent his teen years riding the ranges and community pastures in both Saskatchewan and Montana. In Regina on April 4, 1927 he married Hazel Kunnick. They farmed for a short period at Cadillac and in 1930 moved with three daughters to Spirit River. Here they farmed his uncle's land for seven years. It was here also that he bought his first threshing machine. He has to his credit the breaking of the first ten acres for many homesteaders around White Mountain. One more daughter was born there. Determination to farm his own land took them to Valhalla where they farmed for two years and then to Halcourt. There they added one more daughter.



In 1946 he sold the Halcourt holdings and moved to a farm at Sundre, Alberta. He carried on farming there until 1954 when he sold out for the last time and went into the trucking business. With several more moves he eventually settled at Pollockville, Alberta and operated with a partner in oilfield hauling. This carried on until 1973 when Clarence and Hazel chose to sell their holdings and retire. Clarence still keeps busy with his mechanical abilities and Hazel with her boundless abilities for handcrafts. She is especially noted for her crocheting. They now live at Rosemary, Alberta, a small town near Brooks and within visiting distance of their family.

Arlene is farming with her husband Conley Martin in the Halcourt-Beaverlodge area. They have three children — Dianne, a C.N.A. and now Mrs. Bernie Dunbar, Heather who is working on her Master's degree in home economics, and Roy, an enthusiastic sportsman is attending Beaverlodge Elementary school.

Louise married a Halcourt boy, Donald Kinsman and they make their home in Rimbey, Alberta. They have five children, Karol and Marvin who are married and live in the southern part of the province, Sharron, married and works as a real estate secretary in Edmonton, Delvin, an oilfield worker, and Rhonda who is attending school at Rimbey and has achieved many awards for her skating ability.

Phyllis married Donald Sherck of the Lower Beaverlodge district. They have three children — Lloyd, an RMCA engineer graduate, a lieutenant, is training as a pilot in the Canadian forces and is presently enjoying his flying endeavours, Rena, a librarian with the Dept. of Education Early Childhood Services of Alberta, and married to Blaine Kyle of Beaverlodge, and Terry, a high school student at Beaverlodge who keeps busy with her horses, teaches Sunday School and is a candy stripper. All three were 4H enthusiasts.

Verona married a trucker-farmer David Sturrock. They live at Bon Accord, Alberta and have one son Barry. He is in school and is an enthusiastic horseman.

Mary married a rancher — Donald Bartman at Pollockville, Alberta. They have four children — Marty, Shelly, David and Janice. All are in school and enjoying life on the ranch along with 4H and Gymkana activities.

## **THEODORE CLELAND**

Theodore Cleland was born at Osgoode, Ontario, of Irish parentage. He farmed, grew fruit and did masonry work, but the West called. He spent one year in North Dakota and almost a year in Vancouver, in 1890. He made two other trips to the west and at Edmonton was persuaded by Charles Carson to visit the Peace, in the hope of finding farms for himself and his two sons.

In 1913, he left Osgoode by train for Edson and from there he walked over the Edson Trail. At Grande Prairie he sought out former neighbors, Jim Crerar and Cecil Sulley, who were settled a few miles northwest of the City. There he saw oats yielding 100 bushels per acre, selling at \$3 per bushel. The trip over the Edson Trail had been grim at times because of a

shortage of supplies and towards the last the diet was corn flakes and water. This however was forgotten when Alex and Jim Crerar took him on a tour of Grande Prairie. When Theodore came to the hill overlooking the Red Willow with the snow-capped Rockies in the background he decided this would be his home. He filed on N.E. 5-71-10-W6. Adjoining land was available for his sons, Roy and Ben.

The following year, Theodore returned with Ben and built a peeled poplar cabin with a sod roof, a barn, a sod hen house, dug a well and broke ten acres of land, with oxen. Ben remained to develop his homestead.

In 1915, the father sold his orchard and dairy farm in Ontario and shipped a carload of settler's effects, a small herd of Ayrshire cattle and two horses to Edson. Ben went out to meet the family, caching two tons of baled hay and a ton of oats at stopping places en route.

The journey to Halcourt took about two weeks. March winds melted the snow on the south slopes of the steep hills and the roads became very muddy. Camping along the trail was a great thrill for the younger members of the family. Each evening there was usually a concert in the bunk house of the stopping place. The music was supplied by mouth organs and jew's harps and was interspersed with singing and tall tales to give an introduction to the North.

Memories linger, as when one of the Ayrshire cows refused to leave a dead newborn calf, but was driven on. Twenty miles up the trail she bolted to return to the calf, with Harold Taylor, a neighbor boy from Osgoode in pursuit. When the wolves howled that night Harold almost beat the cow back to the stopping place.

The going became very bad at the west end of Sturgeon Lake so the freight had to be cached and with eight horses on one sleigh the party, after buying a supply of black bread from the nuns at the Mission, moved on to Grande Prairie.

From Grande Prairie they travelled by democrat and arrived, weary but happy, at their new home. The next day they attended church at the Halcourt Methodist Mission and were welcomed by neighbors who came out of the bush, by saddle horse, wagon, buggy and on foot.

The first seed oats were purchased from Sam McNaught and Jim Bauman. Brome seed was bought from Norman Talbot of Grande Prairie and ryegrass from the University of Alberta. The livestock consisted of Yorkshire pigs, two Clyde mares brought over the Edson Trail, grade Belgians and the herd of Ayrshires.

The Cleland home was always open to those passing by, for a visit, a meal or an overnight stay. Theodore was a staunch politician, a Liberal. Obviously candidates of other parties would stay overnight at the Cleland home and issues would be discussed well into the night. An exception was made when Hugh Allen was a U.F.A. candidate and then "the vote was for the man".

The Halcourt Cemetery was planned by Theodore Cleland, Dan Bailey and Rev. Finlay. For many years the Cleland democrat, a deluxe model pulled by a spirited team, was the hearse and Ben and his father were the undertakers. At times there was a corpse in the granary.





Christmas at Clelands, Mrs. Grace Longson and family, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, Rev. Tom Gilroy.



Mr. Cleland and Ted Chambers clearing the Halcourt cemetery.

Theodore was named postmaster after Tom Metcalfe relinquished the original Halcourt post office. He hauled the mail to Hinton Trail, Elmworth and Rio Grande, with his faithful team Slim and Gin. A telephone exchange was established in the Cleland home. Thus in many ways the Cleland home was the centre of the Halcourt district.

Theodore shared the dream of the Coast Outlet along with many others but did not see it become a reality. He died very suddenly in 1926, age 57 years.

Mrs. Cleland, nee Sarah Moffitt, was born at Kemptville, Ontario and her five sisters were expert weavers. Taking the raw wool, they washed, carded and spun it into beautiful colored blankets, rugs, coverlets, socks and mitts. She passed away in 1948 at the age of 79. Life on the homestead was very demanding but she carried her share with a smile. No doubt it grieved her to see the old home destroyed by fire in October, 1932, but it was replaced the next year.

Roy filed on the S.W. 8-71-10-W6, and married Jennie Bovington in 1929. He retired in Kitimat and passed away in 1973. There are three children. Bruce is a shop foreman in Kitimat. Donald joined the army and took radar training, and later worked for the Hudson's Bay Co. at Prince George. Maureen married Ben Sumlack and resides at Red Deer.

Ben married Thirza White in 1928. He farmed at Halcourt and was caretaker of the Halcourt cemetery for 26 years. They retired to Kelowna after selling to Clarence Howe. There are two children. Gordon is at Fort St. John. Beth married Jack Krummel and is tak-

ing nurse's training in Avoca, Iowa. Jack was killed in an accident in 1964. Ben passed away in November, 1973, 12 days after his brother Roy.

Pearl married Lester Longson in 1929 and they lived in the Two Rivers district until they retired to Beaverlodge. She graduated from the Scottish Nursing Home in Calgary and for many years was on call in the Halcourt district as a maternity nurse, often caring for the entire family until the mother was on her feet again. She recalls that on one occasion she even had to provide the groceries, to be recompensed 20 years later. She was keenly interested in community welfare and School Fairs, and was church organist for many years. Following Lester's death in 1965 she moved to Central Park Lodge and later to Swanhaven Nursing Home, Grande Prairie. There are two sons, both farming in the Two Rivers district. Dalton married Betty Lock, and Melvin, Doreen Lock.

Rita married Carson Dalglish in 1931 and they continue to live on the home farm. She taught in Vancouver, Crystal Creek, Hinton Trail, Halcourt, Wembley and Beaverlodge until retirement in 1965. They have one son Bill, who lives on the former Roy Cleland farm. Bill has taken winter employment in the Yukon and Northwest Territories on oil exploration work. By doing this, he has been able to purchase the start of a herd of Charolais and Hereford cattle.

Bill married Cathleen Fraser in 1959. She was a nurse's aide at the Grande Prairie, Hythe and



Pearl Cleland on Ben Dahl's Horse.



Beaverlodge hospitals. They have four children: Lorne, Lyle, Michael and Sharleen.

Over 60 years have gone by since the Clelands first sighted their Valley Home. How we wish that the early pioneers could have seen the development in this country.

### CHARLIE COOK

Charlie arrived in 1912 from the Klondike and homesteaded near Halcourt, on the S.W. 31-70-10-W6. He was a very good carpenter and helped build the Halcourt Methodist Church. He was very faithful in attending church. His health failed and he died in 1923. Burial was in the Beaverlodge Cemetery.

### JAMES CORY

Jim Cory arrived in 1908 and squatted along the Red Willow river but when the survey came he found that he was on a school section. This required a move to S.W. 6-71-10-W6.

Jim was an expert with the broad axe and was in steady demand for work on log houses, including those of Oliver Johnson, Charles McNaught, Theodore Cleland and Ralph Carrell.

His later years were spent on his second homestead in the Itipaw district. Jim died in Edmonton.

### THE ANTON, ELMER AND BEN DAHL STORY — by Elmer Dahl

My grandfather came to Minnesota in 1850 from Oslo, Norway and was a blacksmith in St. Paul when it was just a village. My father, Anton Dahl was born in St. Paul in 1858.

Dad and mother were married in North Dakota in 1888 and I was born one year later. They then moved to Roseau, Minnesota where dad homesteaded. The other nine children were born there.

In 1904 dad, Ben and I went to North Dakota to find work. I worked on different farms for a few years, then I felt the need of more education, so for four years I worked on the land in summer and in winter I did chores for my board and went to school. The man I worked for eventually married my teacher. After her husband's death she moved to Grafton, North Dakota. We have visited her many times in the last 25 years. She passed away only a few years ago.

In 1909 dad came to the Beaverlodge district and wrote asking Ben and me to come too. So in March 1912 we started north. We came by train as far as Edson. There we met Bert Cook who volunteered to haul our bed roll, what food we would need on the trail and some clothes. Our trunks had to stay in Edson until the next winter, when we would be going back for a load of freight.

Victor Burt was coming to join his father too, so we walked together. When we got to the Big Smoky river the ice had broken up so we camped one night on the other side. The next morning Mr. Goodwin, who kept the stopping place, said that due to an ice jam above the crossing, the river was clear of ice and he would take anyone who wanted to go across in the row boat. Vic Burt, Ben and I went across, leaving everything with Bert Cook except one blanket each.

When we reached Grande Prairie we went to Benson's restaurant for supper. I had some bank drafts but

no cash, so I asked the proprietor if he would cash a draft, as that was all the money I had. He replied, "Eat your supper and breakfast, we have a bank in town now. You can get it cashed there and pay me then." The next morning I went to Patterson's store and asked if he could tell me where the bank was. Mr. Bill Innes pulled a suitcase from under the counter and said, "This is the bank and I am the manager, what can I do for you?" I was told he had brought \$20,000 from Edson in that suitcase to start a bank.

Dad was building a log house near Lake Saskatoon for Fred Blanchard, so Ben and I helped him finish the job.

We went to Twin Lakes, now the Clairmont district to get our clothes and the rest of our bedding at Bert Cook's. We found he had put everything "his as well as ours" in a tent, and a grass fire got out of control and burned the tent and contents. We were out of clothes and bedding.

Dad had filed on the N.W. 25-71-10 now owned by Vern Hill. He had a log house built, 16 x 16, and upstairs, a ladder nailed to the wall was the stairway. He had a barn 18 x 18 and built another that fall to accommodate the horses we had acquired. He also had a dug well for the water supply. We burned mostly wood for heating and some coal which we got from the strip mine Alex Ray operated near where the Halcourt picnic grounds are today.

Ben and I filed on land in the Halcourt district, mine N.W. 32-70-10, Ben's S.E. 6-71-10. Our mail came every three weeks if nothing happened to the mail wagon such as muddy roads or a breakdown. Our roads were just trails from one homesteader's house to another. There was some one living on nearly every quarter section, most of them bachelors. They were of nearly every nationality, but most spoke good English.

We bought our food supply at Lake Saskatoon that first summer. But we bought a year's supply in Edson the next winter. About December 1st we began making up our grocery list for the coming year. We hung it on the wall and added items as they came to our minds. We presented our list to the different stores in Edson for bids, sometimes quite a difference in price.

The first summer I bought a team of horses, harness and a sleigh. Dad did the same. The next winter Ben drove dad's team, I my own, to Edson. Mr. Colebrooks, a Hudson Bay manager and his wife had been transferred to another place and he hired us to take them to Edson. He put a small tent on the back end of my freight rack, put a small stove and a bed in there; that was their home 'til we got to Edson. We got \$100 for that plus the tent, stove and a big Cariboo robe that we used for years. Dad and I bought a walking plow and disc. We hauled them back as well as our grub stake for the year. We got back on February 16, 1913. Then dad and I went to Grouard to get freight from the Revillon store.

The first 24th of May I remember celebrating at Beaverlodge was in 1912, at the Bob Steele farm, now the farm of Norman Hauger. We played ball, just picked up teams, no lunch sold, not any refreshment stands, as there was no fruit or candy to sell. Those who stayed until supper time brought their own picnic lunch, and fortunate indeed was the bachelor who was





Ben Dahl and Earl Jones plowing on R. C. Lossing land.

invited to share a feast. There was a dance that night in the log school house in the old Beaverlodge town site. Harry Walker with his violin was the dance band. There were over 40 men and five girls. No wall flowers that night. The next big event was the 1st July sports at Lake Saskatoon. A much bigger celebration than the one on May 24th.

People came from near and far — brought their grub box as this was a two-day affair. They also brought their bed roll, some families brought their milk cow, as there was no one left at home to do chores, and the milk was needed for food while at the picnic. Old Silvertip Campbell had gone to Edson for a load of apples and oranges which he sold for 25¢ each. They didn't last out the first day of the sports. This time we had horse racing, bucking horses, foot races, ball games and eats. They made two big platforms for the two nights of dancing, one for the Indian people and one for the settlers.

Our first four Christmases were spent either on the freight road, or a bunch of us bachelors got together in one of our shacks and had dinner.

My first invitation out for Christmas was in 1916. Dad and I were invited to Mr. and Mrs. Riley Elliotts. It was very cold, 50 or 60 below. But that sure didn't stop us from accepting that invitation and did we ever enjoy that dinner.

In 1914 the 24th of May sports was held partly on Billy Johnson's land and partly on dad's. After the dance a lot of the boys just spread out their bed rolls along the creek bank and went to sleep.

The next morning I started making pancakes for dad and myself and a few others, pretty soon a few more would wake up and come to the house. Before the morning was over I had made pancakes for over 25 men.

In 1913 Ben and I each broke 20 acres on our homesteads. Ben continued to work as a hired hand for Jim Bauman and I worked with dad. Both of us did any odd jobs we could pick up to make an extra dollar. In 1914 we hauled freight from Edson for I. E. Gaudin, as well as a binder and drill that dad and I bought.



Neighbours moving the barn from the Cook place. Tom Kinsman, Wes Cage, Ran and Frank Cage and Elmer Dahl.

Then in December 1914 Bert Johnson, Percy Mercereaux and I went to Grouard for Government telegraph wire. We arrived at the East Prairie river stopping place on Christmas day. I had been able to buy some fresh fish and potatoes at Grouard so we had them for our supper Christmas dinner. A real treat from bread and bacon (sow belly of the trail). This wire was to be used to extend the telegraph service to Fort St. John. Percy and Bert unloaded their loads between Lake Saskatoon and Beaverlodge and I unloaded mine about four miles northwest of Beaverlodge. In 1914 we broke another 10 acres on our homesteads and 40 on dad's.

We continued to break a few more acres on our homesteads as well as crop what had been broken.

In 1917 I rented dad's farm and bought his share of the machinery and his horses. Ben continued to work out and rented his land to others. Dad went to Grande Prairie and built a feed barn. He operated it for only one year and sold it. He came back to the farm and stayed with me until 1918 when I moved to Halcourt. Then dad rented his land to Steve Craig.

By 1919 I had acquired 9 horses, 3 of them mares, a wagon, a set of sleighs, harness for 6 horses, harrows, a plow, a seed drill, a binder and a disc. Ben had 4 horses, a buggy and harness. We decided to work partnership and built a log house on Ben's land.

In December 1920 we got word that dad was very sick at John Taylor's farm near Rolla. I went up there on horseback. There was a doctor at Pouce Coupe and a makeshift hospital, so I had dad moved there on December 21. He passed away Christmas day and is buried in the Rolla cemetery.

I married Anna Cage in 1924. We lived in the same little log house until 1931, when we built a seven-room house on our farm. Ben went to Saskatchewan in 1926 to manage our uncle's farm. He came back in 1930 and built a house on his farm. In 1935 Ben and I dissolved partnership.

Anna and I have four children. Laura married Allan Hauger and they farm near Valhalla. They have three daughters. William married Josie Hauger. They have six children. Joan married Einar Loven. They have two girls and live in Beaverlodge. Karen married Rodney Ashton. They have two children and live at Bawlf. In 1951 Bill and Josie bought our farm and we built a house in Beaverlodge where we are now living. We were very interested in community affairs, especially the church, school and the curling rink.

I served on the school board as secretary-treasurer at Halcourt for 13 years and the only set back in all those 13 years was when I had to have the counter signature of Russ Walker on a cheque. Russ was working in the field and used the tractor wheel to hold the paper. The bank refused to honor the cheque as the signature was not written in Russ's fine Spencerian hand.

Ben married Byrl (Wartenbe) Elliott in 1938. In 1946 he sold to Foster Wartenbe and moved into Beaverlodge where he built a feed barn, now on the George Carty farm. Byrl died in 1959. Ben retired to the Hythe and District Pioneer Home and is now in the Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie.

#### **WILLIAM C. DAHL FAMILY**

Bill Dahl was born April 29, 1927 at Halcourt on his Uncle Ben's farm. The family, the Elmer Dahls, moved on to their own farm just one mile east of the Halcourt store when Bill was about four years old. This land Bill now owns.

He took 11 years of his schooling at Halcourt and went on to take his 12th year in Grande Prairie. He farmed along with his dad for several years and also spent one winter clerking in the Elmworth store along with Bob Funnell.

In October of 1949, Bill married Josie Hauger of Beaverlodge. She took her business training at Garbutt Business College in Lethbridge and was employed at the Beaverlodge Experimental Station. She was also a receptionist for Doctors Dobson and Young of Beaverlodge. In this job she gained medical knowledge which was very beneficial in later life.

Bill and Josie built a house on the Elmer Dahl farm and began a father-son operation. At this time Halcourt had a very active curling club in which the Dahls were ardent curlers. Bill was draw-master for many years, while Josie took her turn in the concessions booth.

After 15 months of wedded life Bill and Josie had the misfortune to lose their home and all its contents by fire. Then for a time they moved in with Senior

Dahls and, as spring drew new life and hope so it was that Bill and Josie too were now blessed with their first boy, christened Larry William.

That summer the Elmer Dahls left the farm home and moved to Beaverlodge, leaving Bill and Josie to rent for the next ten years. Farming was no easy task and it seemed an endless struggle with lashing hail storms, drought or wet falls. However, there was no turning back. Josie tended large gardens and always raised flocks of chickens. Bill carried on a mixed farming operation with livestock plus taking over his uncle's threshing outfit. His threshing operations carried on for many years after most farmers had progressed to more modern equipment. He had to call a halt when men were not available to pitch bundles or bundles available to pitch.

In 1957 Bill bought the family farm. Both Bill and Josie were always very active in community affairs. Bill serves on the church board, is secretary of the U.G.G. and is also caretaker of the Halcourt cemetery. Josie has for more than 15 years been a Sunday School teacher, been on the church board and served as church secretary. The first Halcourt Ladies' Club was organized at her home. She is at present its secretary-treasurer. She writes the Halcourt News for the Beaverlodge Advertiser.

Bill and Josie have a very strong Christian faith which was a carry-over from their parents. God has richly blessed them with a family of six, four sons and two daughters. The children are all receiving a good education. Larry went on to the field of electronic technology at S.A.I.T. in Calgary. Robert received his high school diploma at Beaverlodge and is now employed at the Beaverlodge Research Station. He too serves on the church board. Douglas, Lorraine, Ricky and Dorothy are still attending school. They are very active in the 4-H Beef Club, Douglas not only with a heifer-steer project but also in the capacity of treasurer of the club. They enjoy some sports such as hockey, baseball and curling but as a whole prefer just being at home on the family farm.

#### **ROY DEMPSKY**

Roy Dempsky came from Russia about 1928. He bought land from Stokee, south of Halcourt hill.

He was a strong advocate of the use of sweet clover, even though his soil was considered excellent. However it did suffer repeated soil drifting and it took several years for him to realize that the drifting resulted from the sweet clover making the soil so loose that it was subject to erosion.

He built a fine big house after his wife Annie came from the old country where she and Roy had been separated in the Revolution ten years previously. They had no family. He sold his farm to Bill Adams, then it passed to Peter McNaughton. Eddie Klein now lives there. The Dempskys left in the early '60's.

#### **ROLSON DRIVER**

Rolson Driver was one of our happy-go-lucky pioneers. He came from Palmerston, Ontario and filed on the N.E. 6-71-10-W6, just north of Ben Dahl's, about 1914. He was keenly interested in community activities and played baseball with the local team. His violin music livened many a school dance.



At this time the Grande Prairie Sports was a very popular event, so one summer Rolson accompanied a group of young people from this area on a camping trip to the sports. Many pioneers came by horseback, wagon, democrat or on foot. Rain fell in torrents and the sports were washed out. Most of the young people took refuge in the theater. After the dance everyone was permitted to remain in the shelter until morning. Little creeks were running through the tents when the campers returned to the sports grounds next morning. Rolson helped break camp, then mounted one of the wagons and holding his umbrella over his head, sang, "It Ain't Gonna Rain No more, No More."

After proving up his homestead, he sold it to Ben Dahl, and returned to Palmerston, Ontario. Later he went to Toronto where he died while still a comparatively young man.

#### **JAMES EASTMAN**

In 1899 James Eastman was born at Grenfell, Saskatchewan. Later, with his parents he moved to Edmonton. In 1914 he joined the First Contingent Cyclist Machine Corps and was sent overseas. He was engaged in the battle of Somme Hill, the second attack at Ypres, at Passchendaele, Mons and Vimy Ridge. For "conspicuous bravery" he was awarded the Military Medal in 1916. At Villiers Les Cagincourt Jim was decorated in the field and refused a trip to Buckingham Palace, instead chose a four day pass, 500 francs and a trip to Italy with his buddies. Christmas 1918 he spent in England then went back to the lines until March. On Armistice Day he was the first man to cross the Rhine river bridge.

It was in March, 1919 in London at St. Barnabas Church Southfields that he and Dorothy Thomas, a Red Cross worker were married.

They sailed for Canada and had six wonderful days at sea. (Mother sat on deck most of the time watching for icebergs.) They landed at Quebec and boarded a troop train for western Canada. Enroute another train passed and all the men fell to the floor as it sounded like a shell going over. Some of the men were quite angry because the wives laughed. The wives didn't realize how up tight these men were with nerves.

James Eastman received his discharge in 1919 and farmed at Excelsior until 1923, then came to Halcourt district where he cleared and broke 20 acres. Mrs. Eastman and daughters Irene and Elsie arrived by train in Grande Prairie, July 1923. They were met by Jim driving a truck belonging to Bill Oakford. Most of Dorothy's dishes had been broken enroute as the trunks were damaged.

Arriving at Halcourt hill, looking down in the valley at the grain fields and the the Rockies in the distance they knew that it would always be home. But when mother entered her sod shack with a big six-lid Jewel stove, which proved to be a jewel and pile of hay in the corner, all she could do was sit in the middle of the floor and cry. However with determination and her mind made up she set yeast for bread the next day. Grandmother Eastman had made sure the yeast was in the suitcase, also with a lecture to watch those two children as the Indians would steal them or bears get them!

When war was declared in 1939, Jim again was in uniform with The Royal Engineers, but transferred to the Provost Corps and went to England, November 1942. He was sergeant of the Detention Barracks until his discharge in Canada in 1945.

Mother is living in Victoria since dad died in 1964. She has his Military Medal, Mons Star and Peace Medals from both wars.

There were seven children born in this family; Irene, Mrs. August Stolee, Edmonton, born in January, 1920. Elsie, Mrs. Mick O'Connell, Rio Grande, born October, 1921. Ellen, Mrs. Wes Goodman, Surrey, B.C., born July, 1924. James (Junior) Chetwynd, B.C., born September, 1928. Robert, of Vernon, B.C. born 1932. Joan (Dorothy), Mrs. Day Isley, Elmworth, born July, 1935. Thomas, of Red Deer, born January, 1947. There are 30 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

The old home farm is now owned and farmed by our neighbor, Lawrence Cage.

#### **THE JOHN FINNIGAN FAMILY**

Mr. and Mrs. John Finnigan came from the United States in 1913. They travelled over the Edson Trail and homesteaded about a mile and a half south-west of the Halcourt corner. There were two children, Holly and Allan. John was a trustee of the Halcourt school. In order to have the required nine pupils to start the school, Allan began his education at the tender age of five years.

The Finnigans returned to the United States during the twenties and a few years later John died. There was communication with Holly until a few years ago.

#### **CHARLIE FOSTER**

Charlie Foster and his wife Louise, with daughter Mary Catherine homesteaded beside the Red Willow river, living in a log house overlooking a bend of the river. The old buildings may still be seen just north of what is now the Red Willow Park.

Mary Catherine was among the first pupils at Halcourt school.

To avoid the unknown hazards of fall frosts, they had their garden on the hillside above.

Charlie drove in every day to work at the I. E. Gaudin store. He could telephone from Beaverlodge to his home as a government telephone was available at their place, an unusual convenience in those days.

They were both active in the Literary Club which included the presentation of plays.

Fosters returned to the United States when Mary Catherine was about ten or eleven years old. Several years later they sold the homestead.

#### **BILL FRASER**

I left Scotland in 1929 to come to Canada. I arrived at Hussac, Alberta east of Calgary, on May 29, 1929 where I farmed with one of my cousins. As it was very dry we decided to take the horses and cattle north to the Peace River country.

With one of the Fraser brothers we left Hussac in the fall of 1931 with 200 head of horses heading for the north by way of Athabasca to Slave Lake, High Prairie and Valleyview. This road was under construction and was mostly tree stumps. Then on to Grande Prairie,

Beaverlodge and out to Halcourt. This took us six weeks. There was Matt Fraser (my cousin) and myself doing the riding and Frank Wolfe on the wagon with supplies. We arrived in Beaverlodge on October 31, 1931. That same fall the Fraser Brothers from Hussac shipped up 200 head of cattle and wintered them at the Jim Dunbar farm at Hinton Trail.

In the spring of 1932 we drove these cattle north to Fort St. John where we kept them until fall. Then George and Matt Fraser brought them down to Kleskun Lake. George still lives at Kleskun Lake and raises cattle.

In the spring of 1934 I came to Halcourt and bought a quarter of land along the Red Willow river from Mrs. Elliott. I built a house and barn and settled there. On the 15th of March, 1938 I married Chrissie Rueckert. We have two daughters.

I worked in the coal mine for James Dunbar for a few years. I then decided to start on my own and had coal stripped with a bulldozer, the first stripping coal along the Red Willow river.

In 1947 we bought the Ed Williamson farm one mile east of Halcourt as the Two Rivers school was too far for the girls to go to school.

Chrissie began working at the Beaverlodge Variety Store during the Christmas season, then saw that she liked the change from housework so well she has continued there for some years. Our daughter Margaret is still at home and Cathleen is married to Bill Dalglish. We have three grandsons and one granddaughter.

We have been back to Scotland a couple of times but we always come back to the farm at Halcourt. We think the Peace Country is a pretty good place to live.

#### **FUNNELL BROTHERS ON THE EDSON TRAIL — by Arthur Funnell**

Bert, Walter and I arrived in Edson by train on March 7, 1912 and for the next two days we were busy unloading the railroad car and arranging our two sleighloads of freight. We could not find room on the sleighs for all that we had, so we left the binder and disk harrow stacked up alongside the railroad track near the station, where it could be picked up the following winter.

We left Edson on Sunday, March 10 and found the trail very soft and muddy. It was very warm, and the snow had melted. We had two sleighloads of effects and the saddle horse tied behind one of the sleighs. The trail was so soft that we had to double-up the teams several times, and did not reach the Ten Mile stopping place until evening. There we put the horses in the barn, and made for the cookhouse for supper. Here we found a piano, much to Bert's delight, and enjoyed a few songs. However, we weren't long in getting to the bunkhouse for the night.

Monday morning, and we were on our way again. The trail was still very bad, making heavy going for the horses. We reached the "Frenchman's" stopping place at 5:30 p.m. thus completing 20 miles from Edson.

Tuesday morning we awoke to find it was snowing. As the country was very hilly, instead of doubling-up, we had to put chains around the runners to hold back the sleighs when going down hill. We saw several

broken wheels and parts of wagons, also a dead horse — signs of the difficulties of the trail. We completed 15 miles that day, reaching the "Swede's" stopping place at 7:00 p.m.

We were up at 6:00 A.M. on Wednesday. This place was ideally situated, affording a beautiful view of the Rockies. The meals were all that could be desired. We started out about 8:00 A.M. We smashed the sleigh tongue and replaced it with a wagon tongue. We decided we couldn't make the next stopping place, so made camp. 13 miles that day!

We reached the Athabasca Canyon the next day. The hill down to the river was so steep that most of the load shot off the first sleigh — with a flat rack — so we found a different route for the second. We reached the Athabasca river about 5:00 P.M. and put up at the stopping place after making only 5 miles that day. We borrowed a wagon and hauled most of our stuff up a very steep hill on the other side of the river, rather than wait until the next morning.

On Friday morning we found it had snowed during the night. Some road grading had been done, and it took us two hours getting sleighs up one hill. We reached the foot of Fraser Hill and found there was no snow on it, so had to unload and fix up the wagons. We camped out that night. Only made 3 miles today, making a total of 56 from Edson.

Up before sunrise on Saturday. We unloaded one sleigh and put the load on the wagon. The road was bare clay where it had been graded and about half way up the horses refused to go any further. We unloaded and carried everything up on our backs. We took two jags on the wagon by a different route. Then we got going again with one wagon and one sleigh. We camped out again that night, turning in at 10:30 P.M. We made only three miles. Total 59.

Sunday we were up before six, had breakfast and were off again. We reached Church's stopping place and had dinner there. It started snowing and we reached the Little Smoky River at 7:00 P.M. We put up at the stopping place and had a fine supper.

Next morning, we found it had snowed nearly three inches. After travelling about five miles, we found there was a pretty good trail, so again we took the wagon to pieces and put the sleigh together, so we were once more using the two sleighs. We reached the Tony River at 6:30 and put in at Foster's stopping place.

On Tuesday we were off at 7:30 A.M. It was very good going except at one hill where we had to use the block and tackle, or rather we tried the block and tackle, but after snapping off three or four trees, we gave it up, and doubled-up the teams. We sold 40 pounds of pork, some lard and rice to the foreman of the road gang, who said it was the first fresh pork he had seen in twelve months! We made 35 miles that day but as the stopping place was another 15 miles away, we had to camp out in a splendidly sheltered spot.

On Wednesday, we were up at 5:30 A.M. Breakfast again on flapjacks. We are getting heartily tired of them, although I cooked them myself. We jogged along easily and made the House river by noon. We used Fatty Smith's stopping place to cook our grub, and his



bunkhouse to sleep in. The place was crowded, some in bunks and others all over the floor.

Up at 7:00 A.M. on Thursday, and away at 9:00. The trail hereabouts was very good, and we covered the 15 miles to Emerson's stopping place in good time. We passed two loads drawn by oxen. The driver was bewailing his chances of getting up the hill so we took up our own loads and came back and hauled his loads. He said he was also located in the Red Willow, so expected we would be neighbors.

On Friday, we left about 8:00 A.M. and found the trail pretty good. We had company, as Fraser had completed work on the House River and was moving the pile-driver to the Big Smoky River to bridge a ravine there. There two teams hauled the pile-driver. We all camped on the trail at noon and had dinner together. The country was getting to be much more open, and evidently we were reaching the Prairie lands. We reached Sturgeon Lake, quite a little settlement, about 5:30 P.M. and put up at Scotty's stopping place. Again the bunkhouse was crowded, evidence that Grande Prairie country was drawing lots of settlers.

On Saturday we found the lake a splendid sheet of water and the settlement looked right over it. There was a Catholic Mission there and a Hudson Bay Post. We left about 8:30 and passed through what — in winter — was an Indian settlement. About mid-day the trail began to get pretty bad, absolutely running with water. We thought about putting the wagon together again, but decided to wait and see. While cooking dinner, a sleigh passed us with just a little hay on it. It was drawn by four horses — evidence that the trail was known to be bad. We saw our first prairie chickens. We reached Harper's stopping place after dark and the pile-driver pulled in just after. We found most of the floor space in the shack occupied by the bed-rolls of three Mounted Police. We squeezed in about 10:30 P.M. We were now 215 miles from Edson.

This was Sunday again. We were up at 6:30 A.M. and unloaded one sleigh and put the wagon together again. We had breakfast and doubled up the hill as there was not a particle of snow on it. The trail was merely a big pond in many places, and it made hard work for the horses drawing the sleigh. We reached Smith's Stopping Place for dinner. Smith and another chap came from Brantford. Both were football enthusiasts. We discussed the merits and demerits of all the football clubs and players till time for us to be off again. We reached the Big Smoky after dark, and put in at Goodwin's Stopping Place. The place was full up — all going to the Grande Prairie district.

We were up pretty early Monday morning, but found that quite a few of the occupants of the bunkhouse had started off in the early hours to catch the frost. We made a start about 7:30 A.M. and crossed the river, and it looked as though the ice on it would last for ever. The hill on the other side was a very steep and long one but we were told that it had been greatly improved since last fall, when Walter was on it with Dixons and Foys. We passed quite a few loads drawn by oxen, and the poor beasts seemed to be played out. This was the hottest day we had had, being quite like

summer weather. We reached the top safely, and put in for the night at a homestead belonging to a chap named Manning, whom Walter knew. There was no floor in the shack, and as the frost was just coming out, the ground was pretty wet.

Tuesday morning Bert found that he had been sleeping in a pool of water which had soaked through the under blankets. We cooked breakfast and were on our way again. The land hereabouts was quite open, and all taken up. We reached Grande Prairie City by noon, and put the horses up as we had a little shopping to do. It was quite a city, comprising a bank, a store and a livery barn, in connection with which was a boarding house. The bank was a very large institution, with the silver kept in a tobacco tin! We bought saltpeter for curing our pork. We pulled out after dinner and reached Hermit Lake at 7:00 P.M., putting up at a half-breed's place for the night. The shack was very well put together and very clean and tidy inside.



The Funnell log cabin built by the four brothers in 1912.



Arthur Funnell's Halcourt Store and dwelling house, 1924. Bert Osborne and his dog team.

Wednesday we made Saskatoon Lake by mid-day and pulled into the little settlement there to send off some letters. This place was about the same size as Grande Prairie City. Some chap wanted to buy Frank, our saddle horse, but we were not selling him yet. The snow seemed to have gone entirely around here, and the place was all creeks and streams. We caught up and passed an outfit that had left Edson the day before us. They were bound for the Beaverlodge district. Somehow we got onto the wrong trail. We had to cross a creek that was very deep, too deep for our sleighs, so we unloaded the sleigh and put everything on the wagon. We then put the four horses on the wagon and tied the sleigh behind. The wagon crossed all right, but



the sleigh tilted over and shot our box of cooking utensils into the water — two frying pans, kettle, teapot, baking tin, stewpan, plates, cups, knives, forks and spoons. We paddled and fished about but only recovered three cups. It was now getting dark (I expect the language had something to do with that) and the water was icy cold, so we started off again. We reached the Beaverlodge river, which we had to cross. The banks were rather steep, and the water was rushing pretty fast, added to which it was now pitch dark. We inquired at a shack close at hand, how deep the water was, and were told it was not too bad. We all climbed on the wagon, left the sleigh and crossed. It was not as deep as the creek where we had lost our cooking utensils, because there was ice underneath, the water being merely what had drained down off the land, but it was making quite a roaring sound. Now we found that we were lost. We shouted to know if there was anybody home when we ran across a barn, a shack half-completed and a tent but the place was deserted. We were all wringing wet, and my own feet were in a mess. Several days ago, when the weather started warming up, and the frost was coming out of the ground, I had decided that wearing leather shoes inside of four buckle overshoes was a very uncomfortable business. The shoes were soggy during the day, and dried so stiff and hard during the night that I hated putting them on in the morning. So I had invented a new system. I put my boots on the sleigh and stuffed my overshoes with hay! This worked fine until late in the day when water soaked through my overshoes, and I really had wet feet. We put the horses in the barn, and while Walter saddled Frank and rode around to try and discover where we were, we got the stove going in the tent. Walter returned but had not had any luck, so we sat on the bed-clothes and presently went to sleep.

On Thursday morning, the 28th we awoke to the sound of rain on the tent roof. We hitched up and made another start at about 6:00 A.M. After 5 or 6 miles on the trail we saw some buildings, and on pulling into the yard, we were met by people who introduced themselves as the Chapmans. We found them to be very friendly. They fed us, and we were on our way again. Our next stop was at a place where there were two brothers, Harry and Russell Walker, from eastern Canada. Harry was the owner of what he called South African scrip, which was a half section of land. Their shack had only a dirt floor, but we were now used to this. They persuaded us to stay and eat, and not much persuasion was needed. I shall always remember the wonderful rice pudding with raisins that was put on the table! We pulled out again soon after eating, and found that we were not very far away from our destination. It commenced to snow again, and finally, after about a couple of hours travelling, Walter halted his vehicle and said, "Well, I think our land is somewhere around here." And so, we had finally arrived after a trip of 19 days on the trail.

We saw a light and made for it. It came from a cabin owned by a man named Jim Cory. It was built on the bank of a creek and right across the creek was another cabin, inhabited by an ex-railroad man, named Bob Shaw, his wife and daughter. He had lost a leg in a

railroad accident. We had a chat together and it was decided that we should split up, Walter going to stay with Bob Shaw and Bert and I with Jim Cory. Bert and I had become used to sleeping on the floor, but we decided we would like to get busy on living quarters of our own.

We found a place where we could cut some good-sized cottonwood logs. The first building was a barn. It was nothing fancy, as we were not expert enough to cut dove-tail corners. When it was completed, we pitched our tent in one end and the horses in the other! It was a great treat to be on our own, and I am sure that it made things more comfortable for the Shaws and Jim Cory. However, they had been very good to us.

About a mile to the south, we found we had another neighbour, Frank White. We had a section of land, west of Shaw and Cory, and the first fine day we had, we wandered over the place, to see what it looked like. Considering that Walter had filed on it while it was under snow, we decided we had been pretty fortunate. We now got busy doing some fencing, as we were having trouble keeping the horses close to home as they had found an alkali lick.

We cut rails and posts, and having no hay wire to spare, we cut green willow branches and tied the rails to the posts with them. They worked pretty well, as they dried and became quite stiff and firm.

We had to be careful to keep track of the kitchen supplies as we would not be buying any more until we made the trip back to Edson next winter. So we tacked a strip of cardboard to the inside wall of the barn, and jotted down each item as it was used up.

My brother Tom arrived from England in May, having walked up the trail, so we were now four brothers, bachelors, and all living together!

We arranged with Jim Cory to build a house for us. He was a fine man with a broad-axe, and was in much demand. We could not pay him in cash, as money was practically non-existent, so I picked rocks for him behind a team of oxen owned by George Burt, until ten acres had been broken. This was my first experience in the business of exchanging labour, but there was a great deal in those early days.

More people were coming in all the time. Charlie Hedges was across from us on the west, Dave McLellan was north of them; Jim Howarth and his boys, Harold and Norman, were north of us, and Bannock was north of them. I never did know his real name, but he must have worked as a cook on some outfit, to have picked up a nickname like that.

As for water for our needs, there was a creek running, in the spring close to our house, and when that ran dry, we hauled from another creek, about a mile away.

We were now busy clearing our land. This was not too heavy a job, just bluffs of poplar and willow. We found that chopping out willow-crowns was a much harder job than rooting up poplars.

We took in the Lake Saskatoon Sports, which lasted for several days. Mr. C. Hopkins very kindly invited us to make his house and barn our headquarters. We found good sleeping quarters in the hay loft, as did many others. There was a sing-song in the house every



evening, with many good voices — including Dan and Mrs. Chambers, the Dixons, Foys, McNaughts, and others. A very happy time!

On Sundays we attended the Methodist Church on what is now Halcourt Hill. It was truly a community church, a place where one would meet his neighbours, and sometimes people from the Beaverlodge area.

We enjoyed the hearty singing, but I am sure the four of us were hoping that after the service some of our married neighbours would be kind enough to invite us to their homes for supper! What a treat for us after a week of my cooking!

When harvest time came, we found that the wheat on the new breaking had gone to straw, very light heads. Most of it was frosted.

Rabbits were very numerous, and one could knock over a pair of prairie chickens with a lump of earth. They helped out wonderfully with the meat supply.

In November, Tom and I got jobs on a survey crew as axe-men. We enjoyed this although it was pretty cold sleeping in tents, and moving every few days and pitching tents again on the snow. The work was completed on Christmas Day, and the whole crew went down the Edson Trail, and on to Edmonton, where we were paid off. Our pay was \$30.00 a month and board! Tom got employment in a lumber camp west of Edmonton and I got a job in a law office in Saskatoon. We arrived back early in the spring, to put in another six months on the farm. More people had arrived during our absence, and the vacant quarters were few and far between. We cleared more land, and did more breaking.

#### THE FUNNELL FAMILY — by Arthur Funnell

Our family, consisting of my father Thomas, a carpenter, my mother Minnie and four brothers, Walter, a horticulturist, Bert, a printer, Arthur, a civil servant in the Middlesex Guildhall and Tom, who was apprenticed to a trade, were living together at Epsom, Surrey, England.

In 1903, Walter went out to Canada and filed on a homestead in Nokomis, Saskatchewan. In the fall of 1911 he wrote to say that he was going to northern Alberta to look at an area called the Peace River country and would like to know whether we would be willing to go out to Canada and take up farming. We replied that we would all be willing to go out. In December we received a further letter telling that he had made the trip to Edson, where he had met Fred Dixon and Ellsworth Foy and their families and had driven a team for them up the Edson Trail to a place that is now known as Appleton. He had looked over the country, liked what he saw, and had filed for us by proxy. We would have to report at the Dominion Land Office in Grande Prairie by June 1912.

The family decided that dad and mother should stay in England for another year or two until we had things a bit ship-shape over here. Bert and I left Liverpool for the promised land on January 29, 1912. Tom was to leave two months later, after he had finished his apprenticeship.

We found a lot to do at Walter's homestead, getting things ready to load a car of settler's effects — five horses, bales of hay, sacks of oats, farm machinery,



The wedding of Tom Funnell and Ethel Bastion.



The wedding of Miss Lemoine O'Neill and Walter Funnell. Attendants, Miss Isabel McNaught and Tom Funnell. At the Charles McNaught home.



The Funnell family, Bert, Madge, Hubert Black, Dad, Arthur, Tom, Ethel, Mother, Tom and Bob.

and our three selves. We arrived at Edson on March 7 and loaded our two sleighs for the trip north.

We arrived at our destination on the 28th March and moved in with the Bob Shaws and Jim Cory. We got busy and built a log barn, pitched our tent in one end, the horses in the other and moved in. Tom arrived in May. Jim Cory built a house for us, so we were able to move out of the barn.





Dad and Mother Funnell with Kath, Bob, Joyce and Tom.



Mr. and Mrs. T. Funnell's home with grandchildren, Bob, Tom, and Joyce.



"Gardener" Funnell.

Our situation was now rather unique — four bachelor brothers and all living together! Clearing and fencing kept us busy and to get some breaking done we exchanged labour with a neighbor. On Sundays we attended the Methodist Church located on what is now known as Halcourt Hill. It was a real community church, a place where one was sure to meet his neighbors and any newcomers. We enjoyed the singing but I am sure that the four of us were hoping that after the service some of the married neighbors would be

kind enough to invite us to their homes for supper. What a treat for us after eating my cooking all week!

The first year our crop was frozen. The wheat had grown very tall but the heads were empty. Rabbits were plentiful and prairie chicken could be knocked over with a lump of dirt. These helped quite a bit with the meat supply. In November Tom and I got jobs with a survey crew. The work was finished on Christmas Day and they took us to Edmonton and paid us off. Tom got a job in a lumber camp west of Edmonton and I went to Saskatoon and worked in a law office. We came back here in the early Spring of 1913 to do more clearing and breaking, going out again in the fall.

In the winter of 1914 Walter and Bert made their annual trip to Edson for supplies but this time one of the sleighs was made into a caboose and contained a stove as they were to bring dad and mother back with them. My services as a cook would no longer be required and I was very pleased to have mother take over and I guess the boys were too!

We now had a cream collecting and testing station on the farm, on behalf of the Grande Prairie Creamery. Dad, who had been quite a gardener in England, now proceeded to show us what could be done with our garden soil and produced wonderful gardens. He was also much in demand for the making of window sashes.

One Sunday in August 1914, our Anglican minister, the Rev. Hugh Speke, from Grande Prairie informed us that war had been declared between England and Germany. He said goodbye to us as he was leaving immediately for England to rejoin his regiment. In the fall I walked to Edson for the sixth and last time and joined up in Saskatoon. Bert joined an Edmonton regiment. On returning to Canada, I married Kathleen Brownrigg in Saskatoon in 1921 and returned to this district to live. Dad and Charlie Cook built a log house for us on my homestead and we tried our hand at chicken farming. This was not a success and we found ourselves in the store business. We moved our buildings down to a location west of the Halcourt school near the blacksmith shop. Walter, Bert and Tom were farming the section, but Bert decided to pull out, and went down to Saskatoon to get back into the printing business.

In January 1922 Walter married Miss Lemoin O'Neill, the district nurse, who was stationed at the Charles McNaught home at Appleton. Her home was in California and they went there to live. Miss Olive Watherston was appointed to take her place. At first she made her headquarters at Appleton, but moved to Halcourt, during the winter of 1922-23 and resigned in 1925. In 1922 our son Bob was born, to be followed by Tom in 1924, Joyce (Mrs. Arthur Martin) in 1926 and Kathleen (Mrs. Wm. McNaughton) in 1929.

Dad and mother now decided that they would like to have a home of their own in which to spend the remainder of their lives, so dad and Jim Cory built a log house on dad's homestead, leaving Tom in sole possession of our original farm home. In 1927 he married Miss Ethel Bastin who had followed Miss Watherston as district nurse. Their family consists of Mary (Mrs. Lyall Marcy), Gwen (Mrs. Harold Soder-



quist), Betty (Mrs. Jim Haiste) and Dorothy (Mrs. Guy Ireland). Bert returned from Saskatoon where he had been in the printing business and where he had married my wife's sister Madge. She passed away in 1928 giving birth to Peggy.

Dad and mother now commenced a Sunday school — something that had been on their minds for quite a long time. It took hold immediately, and over the years a number of children attended. Bert organized "Funnell's Orchestra" which became very popular in the area between Rio Grande and Grande Prairie. Members of the Orchestra included Bert (piano), Tom Williams (vocalist and drums), Herb O'Brien (banjo), Albert Silverton (banjo), Weston Longson (violin) and others.

In 1936 Bert returned to England to live. Dad passed away in February 1938 in his 80th year after a long and painful illness and mother followed him a year later. In 1945 Bert, who had married again, asked me to send Peggy over to him, and I was fortunate enough to get her away with a trainload of "evacuee" children returning to England after the war. She was then 17 years of age. Bert passed away in 1954 and Walter (in California) in 1961.

Perhaps modesty does not permit the Funnells to relate their many years of cheerful service to the Halcourt community.

#### **JACK GIONET**

Jack Gionet homesteaded the N.W. 5-71-10-W6 in 1913. He was nicknamed the "Flying Frenchman" because it took a saddle horse to keep up with him. When he was out of salt pork and beans, he took off across country to Beaverlodge with his little dog Biddy running close to his heels.

Jack's hobby was carving models of ocean-going ships. They were usually about two feet long and equipped with all the necessities: bridge, stacks, life boats, rope and anchor. Each ship was painted true to the line to which it belonged. The last boat he carved was named Alma, in honor of an especially good friend, Mrs. Chapman, Senior.

After the Second World War, Jack sold his farm to Roy Luxton, who later sold to Carson Dalglish.

Jack died in a Sanitarium at Vernon, B.C.

#### **"SCOTTY" GORDON**

William Anderson Gordon was born at Blair-Gowrie, Perthshire, Scotland and spent his early years there. He enlisted and served through the Boer War, then returned for a while to Scotland.

He emigrated to Canada, living for a number of years in Manitoba doing building and carpentry work. When the World War I broke out, he enlisted with the Endcliffe-Shellmouth Rifle Association and went overseas with the Canadian Forces, serving with distinction.

He came to the Peace River country and his only homestead was near Spirit River. During the 1920's he lived at Lake Saskatoon sharing community activities and working at various things. Again he moved and lived for some time in the Hinton trail district, then at Hazelmere. He was well known in all places as he remodelled houses, built chimneys and in his own way, took part in the life around him.

About 1940 he came to live in the Halcourt district, residing in what had been Frank White's log house. He stayed there until the spring of 1958 when the house burned down and he was left with only the clothes he had on and the shovel he was using. Crosbie McNaught took him home that night and he stayed for the rest of "his time" there.

The sad part of the fire was that all his life-time mementos, war medals and keepsakes, were burned beyond recognition. He lived in the McNaught house five years after Crosbie passed away, keeping well and content. He became ill in September 1966 and passed away in January, 1967. He is buried in the Veterans' part of the Grande Prairie cemetery. He had two sisters, Janet and Margaret and brothers Jim and Edward, but had not kept up communications since the mother died. Efforts to find them by writing were fruitless.

Sometime someone may come and want to know this story. It is a brief sketch of the life of a quiet, honourable and interesting man.

#### **THE GRAF FAMILY**

Mr. and Mrs. August Graf, Senior were married in 1907 at Napoleon, North Dakota. They moved to Estevan, Saskatchewan in 1911. They farmed there and August worked with steam engines in different parts of the country.

In 1927 the family loaded their farm equipment and stock on freight cars left the dust and drought of Saskatchewan to move to the wonderful Peace River country, landing in Sexsmith, Alberta. They farmed rented land there until 1929 and then moved to the Two Rivers district and took up on a homestead where they lived until Mr. Graf passed away in 1930. The family then moved to the Haven district for several years, then moved back to the farm at Two Rivers and built the house and farmstead. It was farmed by Harold. Minnie, Martha, Caroline and Ann went to school at Two Rivers. The older children had gone to school in Saskatchewan.

Mrs. Graf lived on the farm until 1943, then left to live with daughter Martha at Pinchi Lake, B.C. She later married Joe Shukis and moved to Kimberly B.C. where she lived until she passed away in 1954.

Albert, born in North Dakota passed away at the age of 7 years. Ida, Mrs. Jack Diebert, lives in Edmonton and has one daughter Eileen. August Jr., born in North Dakota, married Peggy Adams and has one son Coleman. Coleman married Pat Turl and has a son David and a daughter Shannon. They live in Victoria, B.C.

Harold, born in Estevan, Saskatchewan, married Ellen Scorgie and farms in the Beaverlodge area. They have three daughters, Marlene, Mrs. Stan Steinke who has one son Tim, and lives in Wembley; Linda, Mrs. Tom Metcalf, lives in the Haven district on the farm. Jackie is still in school and attends the Hythe Regional Junior High school.

Emily, also born in Estevan, now Mrs. Earl Smyser had one daughter Betty, Mrs. Trevisanutto and lives in Vancouver. They have two sons. After the death of Earl, Emily married Louis Jevning and lives in Dawson Creek, B.C. They have one daughter, Sylvia.

Martha, born in Estevan, now Mrs. Bob Howatt, lives at Hinton Trail and has four sons.

Ronnie married Ivy Taylor. They have one daughter, Sherrylyn and live in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Delbert, married Ann Averages and lives in Edmonton.

Terry, married Janice Webber, and has a family of three, Brenda, Allan and Keven. The family lives at Fort St. John B.C.

Raymond married Merwa Staggs and lives in Beaverlodge.

Bertha Graf passed away in 1935.

Caroline, Mrs. Douglas Jeffrey, has two daughters, Carolinslee and Heather Ann. Caroline passed away in 1957.

Ann, Mrs. Ed McGee, has one daughter Mary Ann and lives in Los Angeles.

Minnie, Mrs. Floyd Martinell, lives in Mara, B.C.

### **THE HALCOURT CHURCH STORY — by Rita Dalglish**

The rush to homestead in the Halcourt area began about 1909 and the need for a place of worship was of great concern to many people.

The Methodist and Presbyterian church missions divided the country into two Mission Fields. The Grande Prairie area was under the supervision of the Presbyterian church and the west, including Lake Saskatoon, Beaverlodge and the districts around Beaverlodge were the Mission Field of the Methodist church.

A young man, Rev. Charles Hopkins, who had homesteaded at Lake Saskatoon, combined the duties of carpenter and minister, riding out from his home midweek to attend to the building of the church on

Halcourt hill and on Sunday to preach his sermon. The settlers around, many without any church affiliation but wanting a church, worked together on the building. These homesteaders lived in log houses with sod roofs at home but for their church they hauled lumber with oxen from a mill on the Smoky river. The church was opened in 1910-11. Rev. Hopkins carved the pulpit and Joseph Bateman made the communion table.

The actual opening was recorded in the Halcourt Ladies Aid minutes: Quote "It is the first church building west of Lake Saskatoon. Money was pledged for the expense of the material. Rev. Hopkins was an excellent carpenter and the local men donated their time and work to build the church. The day of the opening a large number of families congregated with Rev. Hopkins as Master of Ceremonies. Mr. I. E. Gaudin rendered two solos that were very much appreciated by all.

In the evening a storm blew up; the distant visitors were invited to spend the night at Sam McNaughts, with the floor for a bed. All had a good sleep and when called to breakfast, a large kettle full of porridge was served homesteader style."

This church served as our first school and Marion McNaught was the first teacher. For many years this building was our Community Centre. Turkey suppers, concerts and debates helped shorten the long winters. One debate that caused a great deal of fun was "Resolved that a dirty, happy, wife was better than a clean, cranky wife." Men were the judges so the dirty, happy wife was favoured.

The Halcourt Ladies' Aid was active in its support of the little church. Some very ingenious ideas were used to raise money. Chickens were hatched and eggs sold. One lady picked cranberries at Longson's Lake and

Halcourt United Church, 1974.





sold them in Beaverlodge. Others sold home made bread and pies.

Among the earliest members of the Ladies' Aid were Mrs. Foy, Mrs. Dixon, Mrs. John, Mrs. H. Walker, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Laing, Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Cleland. Members travelled five miles or more by oxen, horseback, in wagons and sometimes on foot to attend meetings.

In 1925 our church became the Halcourt United Church. Soon an extension was needed to accommodate the attendance so the districts rallied again and completed the work in a short time. Our faithful organists were Mrs. Foy, Mr. Bert Funnell, Mrs. Brooks, Mrs. Grace Longson, Mrs. Banting, Mrs. McNab, Mrs. Hunkin, Mrs. Pearl Longson and Mrs. Edna Sparkes.

Rev. Don Fraser suggested new pews so good carpenters replaced them with modern pews. The UCW added an aisle carpet, an oil stove and two religious paintings.

Many farmers recall how Rev. Jackson came to their aid at harvest time and lifted each stook to the top of the load with one fork full. Others recall how well Rev. Gilroy played his violin. More than 20 ministers have served this community faithfully, but times make many changes and in 1961 our church was closed. The Halcourt UCW unit continued to be active for a few years until it, too, became actively associated with the Beaverlodge congregation.

Since then the community has repainted the church and tried to keep it in good repair. Tourists stop to rest awhile and reminisce about pioneer days in the little white church with the open door.

In recent years there has been some thought of incorporating the church into the South Peace Centennial Museum but the Halcourt residents decided to keep it on its original site.

On Sunday June 23, 1974, the Halcourt United Church held its 64th anniversary service. The minister was Rev. Clinton Swallow and Mrs. Mary Hunkin was organist. Mrs. Josie Dahl, assisted by two willing helpers with a guitar and an accordion, trained a Junior Choir for this special occasion. After the service a little boy was heard to remark "I like church. I think it's fun."

A congregation of over 90 was present. Pioneers from Grande Prairie were Jim Dixon, Pearl Longson, Ethel Rutledge and Margaret Jones. Rev. Swallow's anniversary message comparing the past with the pre-

sent was greatly appreciated by the worshippers in the crowded church.

A picnic in the church yard followed the service and a bountiful lunch including three freezers of home-made ice-cream made it a big celebration. This lunch hour was an opportunity to visit the minister and meet old and new friends.

The sad part of this story is that Rev. and Mrs. Swallow were killed instantly in a head-on car collision near Beaverlodge on June 27, 1974. This was just four days after our anniversary farewell service.



The first Halcourt Ladies' Aid, Mrs. Tom Cotton, Mrs. Alex Ray, Mrs. John John, Mrs. Dan Chambers, Mrs. Mary E. Lewis, Mrs. Harry Walker, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Foy, Mrs. Cleland, Edith Ray, Lola Walker. 1915.



Church camp at Halcourt Picnic Grounds, early "20's"; Pauline Johnson, Edna Moyer (Small), Rita Cleland, Dorothy Longson, Mrs. Greig, (camp mother), Ethel Lock. Rev. Russell Brown, Bernice Brewer, Gordon Greig.



Anglican Service at Red Willow Picnic Ground with Rev. Quarterman, 1923.

Joint church service at the Halcourt Picnic Grounds. Rev. McSherry and Rev. Jackson, 1941.



Methodist Church on Halcourt Hill, 1912.





Anniversary service, Halcourt United Church with Rev. and Mrs. Hunt, 1932.

### HALCOURT DAHL

Back in 1927-28 the best known horse in these parts was Halcourt Dahl. For several years she was Elmer Dahl's saddle horse and Vivian Hopkins frequently rode her without a saddle. Then came the Halcourt Sports Day and bronco riding was on the program. Two likely horses were in the waiting but four riders showed up. This called for a conference and Ben Dahl reminded Brother Elmer that his saddle horse Sally was nearby. Rider "Bob" a stranger was quickly

thrown, as was Bert "Stampede" Nimons of Calgary, who when he had collected himself renamed the mare "Halcourt Dahl".

For two years Halcourt Dahl was a big drawing card at all the Sports Days and in her time was never ridden. Finally Elmer traded her to Rex Ireland for a tractor. She fell from a truck while being unloaded and after that several rode her to the finish. One morning Elmer found her at his gate, the heroine who had gone to wars, and had returned a cripple.

### HAROLD AND JOAN HAUGER

Harold Hauger, the youngest of nine children of George and Edith Hauger, was born March 20, 1935. Harold grew up on the farm near Beaverlodge. On November 7, 1956 he married Joan, daughter of Olive and Harry Douglas who was born on July 3, 1938. Joan also grew up near Beaverlodge. Harold worked at the Experimental Farm and on construction work as a heavy equipment operator before and after starting to farm in 1959.

For the last few years Joan has been driving a school bus very efficiently and has spent many long hours on the farm tractor. They tell us that they have both coached Junior ball teams — Joan the girls and Harold the boys' teams for several years. And the Hauger story wouldn't be complete without some mention of the string of Welsh ponies that they have been raising for some years for the pleasure of their children.

Their family hobbies are camping, fishing and horseback riding.

Harold and Joan moved to their farm at Halcourt in 1963. They have three children, Ralph, born in 1958, Norma, born in 1959, and Brent born in 1964. Another son, Douglas born in March 1961 passed away December 4, 1961.



Vivian Hopkins on Halcourt Dahl.





Clarence Holmes plowing down brush, 1932.

#### CLARENCE HOLMES

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Holmes came from the United States in the early thirties. The family lived with Clarence's Uncle Fred Holmes for some years and the children went to school at Halcourt. Later they also lived on a homestead at Hazelmere. He was said to have had a strip of breaking a mile long. He also lived along the Red Willow River near the church camp.

He was a good plasterer. His work included the original Beaverlodge hospital.

He now lives at Port Alberni, B.C.

#### FRED HOLMES

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Holmes came in 1917-18 and lived on the Hedge quarter west of Halcourt. Later they took up land south of Isaac Lambert. For many years they lived in a log house with a sod roof. As he had formerly been a cowboy, he used to saddle his sway backed horse "Peanuts" in the morning, in case he might need him, then unsaddle him at night.

When he exchanged work with neighbours, he rather held up progress in the mornings because of a heart condition. He was unable to sleep well at night and did not get up until noon. Mrs. Holmes was nearly blind and the District Nurse used to look in on her frequently.

At the Christmas Concert Fred took pleasure in giving away bags of candy to the children.

#### OTTO HOLTER

Otto Holter was one of Halcourt's more colorful settlers. He remained a bachelor and had decided views on most subjects.

He came from South Dakota in 1914 and stayed with the Bob Shaws while cancelling the A. Hunting claim.

He filed on the S.E. 7-71-10-W6 and later purchased four more quarters.

Otto was a strong proponent of the Monkman Pass Highway, and claimed to have sold membership cards to the value of \$100. There may have been some personal inconvenience, as the enterprise was said to have cost him \$200 at the local "Friendship Centre".

Otto was a good farmer and by the late twenties, he owned a large herd of cattle and threshed most of the grain in the neighborhood.

The story is told about Otto's misadventure in the Halcourt blacksmith shop. He needed some welding done on his car and drove into the shop in his usual commanding way but the brakes did not hold and he crashed through the wall into Luxemburg's living quarters.

He sold his farm in 1963 to John Bunyan and moved to the H. McBryan farm. There, he had an auction sale, and moved to North Dakota where his sister resided. After a short stay, he returned to Grande Prairie and was a guest at Central Park Lodge. Otto had lived alone too long to be happy under strict routine, so his last home was a little shack across the tracks in Beaverlodge. He died in 1969 and was buried in the Grande Prairie cemetery.

#### THE JAMES HOWARTH STORY

James Howarth was born in 1880, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Howarth in Bolton, Lancashire, England. Being a son of a coal miner, it was natural for him to seek a career as a coal miner. In Wiggin, England in 1901 he was married to Miss Jane Baymon. Two of their four children were born in Wiggin.

Looking for adventure, James emigrated to the new world in 1906. He first settled in Lethbridge and two years later he moved to Michel, B.C., where he was



joined by his wife and family. In 1909 Jane gave birth to a daughter, who died shortly after birth. James then moved to Bankhead, Alberta, where he carried on his work as a coal miner, and it was here that their fourth child, Norman, was born.

In 1915 James travelled north, to the Peace River country where he filed on a homestead in the Halcourt district. A month later he returned to his family in the Drumheller area where he resided for the next few years. In 1917 his wife passed away after an operation in Calgary. One year later, son Leonard died from the 'flu' epidemic.

James built a log house in 1916 and returned in the summers of 1917 and 1918 to break ten acres. He proved up in 1920.

In 1925 James and his two sons, Harold and Norman returned to their homestead in the Halcourt area. They resided here and carried on with farming. James passed away February 17, 1946.

Harold married Helen Luxemburg and they have one son, Donald, a chartered accountant at Drayton Valley. Norman left the Halcourt district in 1941 and joined the Canadian Army, where he served for four years. The same year he married Winnifred Nichols of Heinsburg, Alberta. Following his discharge from the forces in 1946, he purchased a farm in the Halcourt area and resided there until 1956, when he moved to Heinsburg. He lived there until his sudden death May 13, 1967. He is survived by his wife Winnifred, and daughter Gail, who is married and lives at Forestburg, Alberta.



James Howarth.

#### CLARENCE HOWE — by Amy Howe

Coming from near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 1951 we first lived east of Grande Prairie. In the fall of 1958 we moved to the farm of Mervyn Jaque, in the Lower Beaverlodge district.

In the spring of 1960 we took over the Ben Cleland farm in the Halcourt area. The old log house here was very cool and comfortable in the summer but the cold winds made it necessary to build a new house in 1966.

We have three children. June, our oldest was born in Saskatchewan. She finished her schooling in Beaverlodge, at 16, took a business course in Grande Prairie and is now working in Calgary for a chartered accountant. Murray took his schooling in Beaverlodge, a year at Grande Prairie College and is at the present time working at the Research Station and farming. Carol, our youngest graduated this spring with honors. I enjoy teaching in the Beaverlodge Elementary school.

Both Murray and Carol have been active in 4H. The former in the Horse Club and the latter in the Sew 'N Sews, doing both cooking and sewing.

In the summer of 1973 Carol assisted in a federal youth opportunity program, Vivons la Vie which offered camp activities at the Red Willow river. Now Carol is looking to attending the Grande Prairie Regional College in 1974.

The Howes are active in the community and church. Amy participates in the many projects of the Halcourt Women's Club. Clarence has helped on church boards and with Cubs. They are members of farm groups.

The Howes may not be athletes, but elsewhere some near relatives make the hockey headlines.

#### PERCY HUNKIN

Percy Hunkin was born on the Island of Guernsey and served as an apprentice on a farm in England for six months. Then he came to Canada, to an apple orchard near Shuswap Lake and as he remarks, he knew so little about it all he was in effect still an apprentice.

Next he spent a year at Kelowna, then a year at the Summerland Experimental Farm. Then on to the Peace and a year working for I. V. Macklin near Grande Prairie. He bought a homestead at Leighmore and farmed there four years, and for a holiday spent a winter back in Guernsey.

In 1931 Percy married Mary McNaught. On a new farm he started a set of buildings, which included cutting logs along the Wapiti and sawing the lumber at the Alvie Elliot-Cook mill.

Part of the farming enterprise consisted of purchasing a basic herd from J. M. Lamont of Berwyn featuring the imported Cuchellen line of Shorthorn cattle.

Mary had her mother's talent in music and shared fully in her community accompanying for the Christmas concerts and teaching music.

The Hunkins were among the first tourists on the new trail to Monkman Pass, making a party travelling with team and wagon and saddle horse and with sons Sam and Robin, then only five and one year old. Dennis and Marjorie were born during the next few years. A



policeman, optician, jeweller and commercial artist are the vocations of their children, now living widely apart in Edmonton, Toronto, Delta and New Westminster, B.C.

Between times Percy served as school trustee for ten years, continued his interest in the Monkman Pass, was the official coffee maker at the Halcourt Annual Picnic, and an active church official.

One venture took him to Upper Cache Creek out of Fort St. John where he remodelled a log house for John Onslow, rancher and author of "The Bowler Hatted Cowboy." Another time he tended cattle for R. D. Symons, artist and author of several best seller award books on wild life and the Indian. As a hobby Percy builds sail boats. In all he has built five of them and he reports they all handle "beautifully." As for profit on the venture Percy admits that he is ahead of his time.

Why sail boats at Halcourt? It all goes back to three generations of sailmakers, including Percy's father.

Percy has two other hobbies: bees and fishing, the former because of his inquisitive interest in living things which reward man for his efforts on their behalf. John Corner is responsible for the bees and fishing combination. Johnny is the Provincial Apiarist for British Columbia and once a year shared a Beaverlodge field day trip with the late Jack Edmonds, Alberta's Apiarist and Peter Pankiw who works for Pierre Trudeau by way of the Beaverlodge Research Station. Percy attends the field days and faithfully follows Johnny Corner's advice "put on plenty of supers and then go fishing."



Hattons and Hunkins on a Sunday picnic.

### T. G. IRWIN

Mr. Irwin came to the Halcourt district from Nanaimo but was originally from Ontario. He homesteaded on a hilly river quarter about a mile east of the Red Willow bridge.

He was a school teacher and taught in the log school from about 1918 to 1921. He kept sheep on the farm and travelled on snow shoes in the winter.

A specialty of his teaching was rapid mental arithmetic. Many of pupils come to mind; some: Max Gaunt, Holly and Allan Finnigan, Martha and Gordon Greig, Norman Howarth, Regina Carter, Mary McNaught, George Tyrrell, Burgess Longson, some of the younger Cages, Rita Cleland and Ian McEachern.

When he left here, he went to Edmonton and possibly retired there. He was one more settler who left a lasting impression.

### EARL JONES

In 1914, Earl and a cousin tossed a coin in Walla Walla, Washington, to decide whether they should seek their fortunes in South America or go up to Canada. They came to Canada and stayed for a time in Saskatchewan. There, they heard of the Peace River country, and decided to have a look at it. Earl filed on the N.W. 2-71-11-W6 in 1915, but the cousin decided it was not for him, and returned to the States.

Not much is known of Earl's early homesteading life. He was a horse lover. He played the banjo sometimes at dances and in July, 1922, married Miss Emma Moore of the Mount Valley district. Their family commenced in 1923 when Dorothy was born. She is now Mrs. Edward Goodman of Rio Grande. Marion was born in 1927 and is now married to Don Sanderson and living at Hinton. William was born in 1931 and is now living at Red Deer; Lewis, in 1933, and living on the home place; and Joyce, now Mrs. McDermott, in 1934, living at Hawk Hills.

In 1929, Earl sold his homestead to the McNaughtons and bought a half section of school land just north of his old homestead. Besides building a new home for the family, he did quite a bit of clearing and breaking for neighbouring farmers.

Emma passed away in 1936 and Earl in 1960.

### THE THOMAS KINSMAN STORY — by Alma Kinsman

Thomas Kinsman came to the Rio Grande from Berwick, Nova Scotia. He first went to the eastern states to work for one of his brothers. Then he came to Canada again, this time to Melfort, Saskatchewan to work as a farm hand.

While there he met a friend, Bill Ness, and the two of them decided they would try their luck in the Peace River country. They filed on adjoining quarters of land in what was later called the Rio Grande district. Both men proved up on their land but due to sickness in the family, Bill Ness went back to Saskatchewan as soon as he had the title to his land.

In 1915 Tom built a log house on his land as well as a barn and granaries and dug a well.

In 1917, dad and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Cage, moved from the Fred Frewer farm at Cut Bank Lake to brother Earl's land and that year I met Tom. We were married on November 20, 1917 and our honeymoon was a trip from mother's house to ours — one half mile. In 1919 our first child, Audrey, now Mrs. Melvin Connell was born. In 1920 our little son William was born and we lost him one year later.

Six years later we left the farm and came to Halcourt to operate a small restaurant and feed barn. Our son Donald was born there. Three years later we rented land in the Rio Grande and in Hinton Trail district. In 1930 we built on our half section in the Sylvester district. In 1939 our daughter Yvonne came to us. Tom worked for quite a while on the Alaska Highway. When he quit that work we bought what was the Fred Holmes farm near Halcourt and really put down roots there.

While we were farming there Clarence Johnson asked us to work for him in his lumber camp. I was cook and Tom was clerk in the commissary. We

worked there in winter and farmed our land in summer. We started in 1946 and I worked for them for 20 years.

Tom passed away in 1959 after a lengthy illness. I continued to live on the farm in summer and cook in winter. In 1961 I bought the house in Beaverlodge where I now live. In 1966 I retired from cooking.

I sold the farm at Halcourt soon after and the half section at Sylvester a few years later.

I enjoy good health, for which I am very thankful so I am able to travel a bit and I do enjoy visiting my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Tom Kinsman and daughter, Audrey. Elmer Dahl and daughter, Laura.

### ISAAC P. LAMBERT

Isaac Lambert was an Englishman from Yorkshire, who, as a young man had worked on farms there. Later he worked in mines in Oregon. When he came to Canada he purchased a farm in southern Alberta. From there he moved to Halcourt and purchased the S.W. 1-71-11-W6 which he farmed until his death in May, 1953.

"Ike" as he was known to all was a splendid type of man, as can be attested to by many a man who called on him for assistance.

Threshing crews were always happy to get to Ike's place as he was widely known as a very good cook. He was also a most successful performer in the art of "water witching", using a forked willow for the job. He witched a splendid well for Art Funnell and his estimate of the depth to be drilled was remarkably accurate.

For several years he and John Miller, from the United States, carried on a very successful business of buying and selling cattle, using Ike's farm as their headquarters.

Ike was a returned man, having served overseas with the Royal Canadian Artillery.

### GEORGE B. LITSTER

George Litster was related to the Litster families of Winnipeg, who were famous for the Litster Pumps.

He came to the Peace from Winnipeg in 1909 and spent the first winter in the Swan Lake district. At Halcourt he filed on S.W. 33-70-10-W6. The Halcourt cemetery was located on the northwest corner of his farm.

For years George was almost blind and suffered from eczema. Many neighbors came to visit him, write his letters, tidy his shack or cook something tasty for his dinner.

He died in the Grande Prairie hospital.

### THE LONGSON STORY — by Burgess Longson

Our father, the Reverend John Longson, a Baptist minister, and our mother, Grace Longson, concerned for the future of their six sons and a daughter, left the town of Sheffield, Iowa in 1913 and headed for the broad prairies of southern Alberta, where C.P.R. land was said to be available. Our headquarters was the hamlet of Nightingale in the Strathmore area.

We had been in our newly adopted country but nine months when my father died, leaving my mother with seven children, Wilfred, the oldest, 15 years and Weston, a mere infant.

Circumstances being unfavourable there, a lesser woman would have given up the quest for land for her six sons. Not our mother! In Calgary she heard a preacher, Bagnell, extol the opportunities of the "Mighty Peace" and in 1916 we arrived in Grande Prairie on one of the first trains to make the complete journey over the E.D. & B.C.

In Appleton we were befriended, as so many before and after us, by the Charles McNaught family. Marion McNaught and my mother, who had never before ridden a horse, spent days in the saddle looking over available land. Mother's knees were so swollen that she could not walk for days. I suspect that sitting was equally impossible and painful.

The result of it all, mother being an aesthetic person, and knowing nothing about land filed on a quarter



At the Longson homesite on the banks of the Red Willow. Lester, Weston and Rose Longson.



overlooking the beauties of the Red Willow river, but with a mere 20 acres of tillable land — the remaining 140 acres benchland and beauty.

We made our first home in a cabin on the Dumbeck farm and from there to a sod-roofed cabin on Hubert Black's quarter. Meanwhile, Carl Schieldge was constructing our farm buildings. It was a happy day when we moved into our rather commodious two-story log house on the brow of the Red Willow banks.

How mother kept a comfortable home and six growing children fed on her \$12.50 per month minister's pension we will never understand. I do know that Lester and I milked cows. Prairie chickens were in abundance and many found their way into mother's oven or cooking pot. Though we watched and admired the "Prairie Chicken Dance" necessity required using a rifle.

If mother made a mistake in taking us so far from educational and other opportunities, she more than compensated for it by her examples of courage, perseverance and the cultural heritage that is ours. Mother was a lady of refinement, soft-spoken and gentle, with many accomplishments. The piano moved with us from cabin to cabin and many evenings we joined her as she sang and accompanied herself on the piano. She taught some of us to play the piano and started others on the violin. Most of us became fairly proficient but Cecil became an accomplished violinist.

For a number of years Cecil played the violin in the Funnell orchestra, which played for dances over a wide range of country; later Funnell's orchestra comprised besides Bert Funnell, Tom Williams, Herb O'Brien and myself. Our youngest brother, Weston carried on after we left. Some years later I had an orchestra of my own composed of Verna and Evelyn Ramsey and Adele and Bill Connell.

One of my delights, as a boy of ten was to roam for miles up and down the Red Willow river. As early as 12 years of age, I accompanied Carl on his trap line to the Nose Mountain and Sheep Creek areas. These experiences and my expedition with Frenchy Billedeau fostered my natural love of the woods and the wilderness. I can remember unhitching the horses from the plow and wandering off into the woods.

Perhaps few of us were meant for the life on the land for which our parents had sacrificed so much. Most of what education we acquired was from Mr. and Mrs. Fred Dixon, those well-loved early educators. At one time Cecil and I rode the ten miles and back to Appleton school where Mr. Dixon taught high school courses several evenings a week. Cecil went on to work his way, in engineering, at Stanford University. The government of the U.S.A. appointed him one of the federal engineers responsible for the construction of the Alaska Highway from Mile 0, at Dawson Creek to Whitehorse Y.T.

Four of us boys, Wilfred, Lester, Roy and myself filed on homesteads south of the Red Willow. Wilfred married Mary McLean from southern Alberta and became a successful farmer in the south. He has been gone for some years now but his wife and family carry on.

Lester of Beaverlodge and Cecil in California are both dead. Weston lives in California and Roy in

Beaverlodge. Our sister, Mrs. Albert Karr lives in B.C.

In 1935, I left the homestead for Jasper as a Big Game Guide. After five years overseas, I again returned to my beloved wilderness as a Park Warden but am now retired with my wife, Anne, in the beautiful Okanagan Valley.



Lester Longson with jumper and team.

### MRS. GRACE A. LONGSON AND FAMILY

Rev. John Longson, a Baptist minister, moved to the Ohio region in 1890's where he married Grace A. Longson. Love of "King" caused him to move to Canada, to the Strathmore Nightingale region, east of Calgary. He passed away shortly after arrival leaving Mrs. Longson with seven young children. Hearing of the great opportunities in the "Peace" she filed on NW 23-70-11-W6 in October 1916 and moved here in 1917 with Lester, Roy, Burgess, Dorothy and Weston; Wilfred and Cecil stayed and looked after the farm at Nightingale until November 1918 when they came with 17 cattle, 14 horses and equipment.

She lived in the "church house" in 1920-21 for the children's schooling in Appleton (Beaverlodge) by Mrs. F. Dixon. In 1918 they rented the Anglican Church house from February to September. The church house was 4 miles south of Beaverlodge at the McNaught "Girls" present home site.

The children, Burgess and Dorothy boarded with the Fred Dixons and Art Tyrrells while they went to Appleton school.

Mrs. Longson found her land location by riding horseback through the district with Marion Martin (nee McNaught) in the summer of 1916. The boys filed on the following land:

Earl Lester Longson NW 17-70-11-W6, Elmworth, September 12, 1917

Cecil L. Longson NW 32-71-10-W6, Beaverlodge, February 1919

Wilfred A. Longson NE 3-70-11-W6, Elmworth, May 1919

Roy C. Longson NE 2-70-11-W6, Elmworth, October 1923

Some highlights from Mrs. Longson's diary of 1918-1919: Sold or traded cattle to Mr. T. Cleland, Dad Ad-dington, Earl Jones and Black Brothers. Mr. Sam McNaught bought a horse "Shorty."

February 27, 1919 — Still cold, we are all feeling better today. Lester got two loads of feed. Cecil's face is some better. Some days like this day, I think and wonder what is before us in this far north country. I

hope and pray the boys will make good and not forget God, perhaps in the years to come we will all know it was for the best we moved here. So many good people are here. We are not alone.

May 14, 1919. Big fire and high wind, other side of the river is about all burnt out. Jumped the river in one place but Roy and I put it out. We were up until after midnight. Wilfred stayed up watching all night.

July 11, 1919 — Another fine day. Roy went to Oakford's for sugar and salt. Mr. Younger, Baptist minister was here, got here for dinner — he came to tell us about the Association Meeting at Hermit Lake Baptist church July 26 and 27. I am in hopes we can go. After supper Wilfred and Dorothy went for the mail at Halcourt, went on horseback. Some time in the near future it is to be hoped there will be a store where the Post Office is. Five miles west to the store, five miles east for the mail and four miles north to take cream.

A little poem she noted:

There is little difference 'twixt great and small;  
Some use their faculties  
Some don't — that's all.

Flu victims she noted were Mrs. Whistler and Mr. Chase.

Lester was renting the Taylor land.

They had fresh fish caught in the Red Willow river nearly every day all spring.

Cows ate wild parsnip and some died.

July 26 — 1919 — Wilfred took his mother to the Hermit Lake Baptist convention for two days of fellowship. Then on to Prairie City and a check on things at the Land Office.

August 10 — Mother, Wilfred and Burgess went with Mr. and Mrs. T. Cleland and girls, Pearl and Rita picking raspberries at Van Horn's mill on the Wapiti. Stayed three days with many neighbors and friends.

October 19, 1919 — Snow came. (It lasted until May 1920 with some snow still on north hills of river till June.

December, 1920 — Wilfred left for Nightingale.

Harry Black, the next neighbor to the west came here sick in March 1920. After one month he was taken to Grande Prairie and then Calgary where he died April 10, 1923.

July 5, 1921. Wilfred was married to Mary McLean at Nightingale. They came to Halcourt in July and settled on Wilfred's homestead sometime in the fall.

August 25, 1922 — Wilfred Archibald Longson was born here in my home. (Nurse Watherston and Pearl Cleland.)

Halcourt, Alberta — 1922 — a very dry summer, not any wild fruit. This is the first year since we have been here that there has not been any fruit to can. In 1921 we canned over 125 quarts of saskatoon berries, in fact this has been a lean year, we will have to buy potatoes.

November 30, 1923 — Mary, wife of Wilfred, had son here. John M.

She left for Nightingale December 20 with the two children to visit her parents and old friends.

Methodist Church, January 7, 1924 — Wilfred, Burgess, Dorothy and Mother went to Mr. Dan Bailey's funeral. The funeral was held in the Methodist

Church in Halcourt. Mr. Bailey's was the first grave in the new Halcourt cemetery, January 7, 1924.

Wednesday, January 9, 1924 — Lester took 60 bushels of wheat to Grande Prairie, \$34.00 for it. Wilfred and Burgess went and caught train for Nightingale.

Roy left October 16, 1924 took a car of cattle to Edmonton. Some of the cattle were Wilfred's and Cecil's also some for Mr. Campbell, one Pat Durant, Roy sold his horse Liggie.

Some 1924 prices listed by Mrs. Longson were:

60 bu wheat \$34.00

8 pigs, 1390 lbs. 5½c — \$76.45

73 turkeys to Pat Burns, \$134.04

January 1925 — sold 7 head of cattle to Frank Brewer \$125.00.

January 1925 — Mrs. Longson, Dorothy, and Weston left Wembley on ED & BC train for Ohio for children's schooling until 1927.

Wilfred and wife never came back to live. They raised their family of eight children east of Calgary.

Lester Longson married Pearl Cleland in 1928 when he moved to the old Gunnar Helberg place — SW 2-71-40-W6. There they raised two sons, Dalton and Melvin, who still live at and farm that area. Pearl lives in Swanhaven Nursing home in Grande Prairie.

The third son Cecil homesteaded 4 miles west of Beaverlodge. He gave it up and moved to California where he became a Civil Engineer. He came back to Canada with U.S. Forces in World War II and helped on the Alaska Highway and Canol oil pipeline projects. He had an army driver and truck and came to see some of his relatives and friends in the Halcourt and Hinton Trail areas.

Roy farmed in Hinton Trail area. He raised a family of six and now lives in Beaverlodge with his wife Jean.

Burgess farmed near Elmworth. He was a trapper, guide and forest warden. After serving overseas in World War II he returned and moved to Jasper, Alberta. He is now retired in Kelowna, B.C. He had three children.

Dorothy, the only girl in the family, married Albert Karr. After farming for a short while at Hinton Trail they moved to Vancouver, New Westminster area where they still live. They had four children.

The youngest son Weston moved to California in the early thirties where he married and had two children. He still resides in western U.S.A.

The mother, Mrs. Grace Longson disposed of her farm in 1937 to Scotty Ray on May 6.

The family had arranged that a house was built for Mrs. Longson at her son Lester's at Two Rivers. She alternated between her family and her little home there until her death in July 1942 in Grande Prairie. She was buried in Strathmore.

## LESTER LONGSON

Earl Lester Longson came to Beaverlodge area in 1927. He brought stock and machinery from Strathmore, Alberta for his mother, Mrs. Grace Longson.

They moved to the Halcourt district to his mother's ranch where he lived for several years.



He homesteaded the NW 17-70-11-W6 at Elmworth, September 12, 1917 on his 18th birthday. After marriage to Pearl Cleland in 1928 he moved to the Gunnar Helberg farm which they purchased. After much sickness of his wife with smallpox, in 1929 he sold his homestead to Arthur Funnell.

Before his marriage Les worked out to help the farm. He helped on Frank Donald's crews and the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company camp north of Grande Prairie. He took a team from home and worked on the highway through the Burnt Hills north of Sexsmith in the early "20's." He often talked of the winter feeding of cattle from stooks frozen to the ground and under depths of snow.

He was a staunch member of the Orange Lodge at Halcourt and after the war and service in the Edmonton Fusiliers he was a loyal Legion member. He farmed at Two Rivers on the S ½ 2-71-10-W6 continuously until his failing health forced him to leave the farm, except for his army years. When the war came he arranged with Roy Horton and his wife Christine (Harrop) to manage the farm until he returned.

He was a commissioner on the railway bridge at Taylor, B.C. after the highway bridge had collapsed. He sold his land to son Melvin and moved to Beaverlodge where he passed away in June, 1965.

Pearl was often called on to nurse neighbors and to assist the District Nurse. She was active in community organizations, whether to arrange a district picnic, supper or get-together. She did much to assist in the Beaverlodge program for the 50th Anniversary of the



Pearl and Lester Longson.

Province of Alberta in 1955. Since she has lived in Grande Prairie many quilts have been made to distribute to those who need them.

The Longson families have always been active in the community and church.

Les and Pearl raised two sons, Dalton and Melvin. Dalton married Art and Olive Lock's daughter, Betty and they have 10 children and 1 grandchild.

Melvin married Lawrence and Jean Lock's daughter, Doreen and they have three children. The sons continue to farm the home "Lake" farm along with their neighboring lands.

Because of ill health Pearl had to leave her home in Beaverlodge and now resides in Swanhaven Nursing home in Grande Prairie.

## JESS LUXEMBURG

Jess was truly our village blacksmith.

When he was quite young he lost his mother. With his father and brother he came from the States in 1903.

His father took a homestead at Nevis, near Lacombe. Jess worked on the railway for a few years. While in that part of the country he married Ethel Graham and moved to Edmonton. Their son died there.

In 1917 Jess and Ethel came to Grande Prairie where he worked as a blacksmith until 1929 when he bought the shop at Halcourt from Mr. Keais. Meanwhile his wife stayed in Grande Prairie for a year or so while daughter Helen finished her schooling. From 1942 to 1945 he served in the R.C.E.M.E. doing forge and machine work.

While Jess was serving in the Engineers he devised a support for the neck of an airman whose neck was broken in a parachute accident. As a hobby he loved to repair guns and make gun sights.

During these war years when Jess was away some farmers were able to get plow shares sharpened in Beaverlodge, others learned to sharpen their own but were glad to let Jess take over this work when he returned. He installed a trip-hammer to help him with the heavy part of share sharpening. During the heat of



Our village blacksmith, Jess Luxemburg.

summer his forge and hammer would be going at 5 o'clock in the morning to avoid the mid-day heat. He would send for Ben Dahl or Foster Wartenbe to help him when he had unruly horses to shoe.

Blacksmith shops could be a jumble of old iron in dark corners, but not Jess's. All his material was neatly laid out or hung up and his floor well swept. Jess carried his work habits into his housekeeping. He kept his house as neat and tidy as his workshop. Ethel was a very hospitable person, often inviting a customer in for lunch while waiting for his piece of work to be completed, and who would say "no" to her lemon pie? She died suddenly in 1953. Jess continued to serve the community for some years but in 1964 he sold to Mr. Sovoboda, a Finlander, who continued to do the blacksmithing. Jess retired to a small house in the school grounds, where he could see all who passed by and enjoy visiting with his many friends.

In 1968 he went to live in the Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie where he still resides.

Jess and Ethel had one daughter, Helen married to Harold Howarth. They have a son Donald, a chartered accountant, in Drayton Valley. He is married and now Jess has three great-grandchildren.



Jess Luxemburg in doorway of his blacksmith shop with Joyce Funnell.



Mrs. Jess Luxemburg, grandson Donald and Jim Howarth.

### ROY LUXTON

Roy Luxton came to Halcourt from Wilkie, Saskatchewan in 1947. After his discharge from the army, he bought the N.W. 5-71-W6 from Jack Gionet. Roy's sister, Rene, assisted him in farming by taking a shift on the tractor during the busy season.

In 1956, he sold his farm to Carson Dalgleish and moved to Vancouver but returned to the Sexsmith area in 1959. He was working for the Department of Public Works in 1968 when illness forced him to retire.

In 1969 Roy died in the Grande Prairie hospital at the age of 50. After a funeral service in the United Church at Sexsmith, the Sexsmith Legion No. 60 held a graveside service at the Emerson Trail cemetery near Sexsmith.

### JAMES ROBERT MACDONALD

Jim MacDonald, of Scottish extraction, was a soft-spoken, quiet, fine young man of about 28 when, in 1911, he filed on N.W. 14-71-9. He and Charlie Edgerton had been operating a butcher shop in Edmonton when they decided to walk into the Beaverlodge area to file on homesteads. The story goes that they walked in and out in seven days. It rained the whole time so they just kept on walking.

Jim joined the army in 1914 and went overseas, but was back by 1916. He had been hurt on a London street and hence demobilized. This injury affected him the rest of his life.

After he returned, he bought a quarter from Vic Flint and another adjoining one from I.E. Gaudin, closer to Beaverlodge. He worked for the Rede Stones and virtually became one of their family.

Jim was one of the first in the Beaverlodge area to have a car. Lulu Edgerton recalls they had hired him one Sunday for a family outing to Rolla, B.C.

In the late twenties Jim's health forced him to sell his land. Jake Heikel bought his homestead in 1927. Jim went to Calgary to live with his brother and twice sought medical help from the Mayo Brothers' Clinic, but all to no avail.



## DICK McGUFFIN

Dick McGuffin was born in Middlesex County, near London, Ontario in 1921. In 1930 he went to Manitoba to live and remained there until he joined the Army in December, 1941. He served overseas and was discharged in November, 1945. In 1946 he worked around Calgary until coming to Beaverlodge with "Beeman" Jack Smith in 1947.

In the spring of 1951 he married Alice McKay. They bought the Vic Burt homestead in the spring of 1952 and have lived there since. Dick worked in the oilfields for several winters. Alice is a very capable school bus driver and manager in her own right.

They have two boys, David and Kelly and one daughter Lynn. David is with Northwestern Utilities in Grande Prairie and is married to Phyllis Schneider. Lynn married Gary Mates, an accountant with the City of Grande Prairie. Kelly is in Grade 10 at Beaverlodge High School.

## ALLEN V. McLEAN

Allen McLean was the first manager of the first Canadian Bank of Commerce in Beaverlodge. He had previously managed the Bank of Commerce at Lake Saskatchewan.

They homesteaded in the Halcourt area and lived in the old Richardson house on the banks of the Red Willow river. He drove to town every day for a couple of years. Then they and their family of boys moved and his boys were very popular with their Shetland ponies. One neighbour girl remembers the "little rodeos" they used to have; one little mare would buck beautifully if you sat on just the right spot.

When the McLeans left Beaverlodge they moved to Vancouver where Allen worked on an Anglican mission boat. Son Don is employed by Imperial Oil Ltd. Ken is a banker. It is not known what Allen, the youngest boy is doing.

## THE SAM McNAUGHT FAMILY

Samuel Crosbie McNaught was born near Brantford, Ontario in 1854. He farmed there all his younger days. Later he made several trips west. One summer was spent in Manitoba. Portage Avenue in Winnipeg was at that time little more than a rutted trail and Red River carts were still in use.

He also spent some time in British Columbia around Vancouver, Victoria and the Coast Islands. In the late nineties he ranched near Didsbury, Alberta. Included in the ranching operation was the rounding up and breaking of wild horses from the foothills. These were later sold in Calgary. He loved the west and hoped to return later, but went to Brantford in 1901 and there married Elizabeth Francis Brown.

She also had been born at Brantford. She began her musical education at age six and started teaching in her teens. She took her Associate Music degree at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. She developed her own Music Academy in Brantford with some of her former pupils teaching under her supervision. This building still stands in Brantford. She continued teaching after her marriage, although they lived on the farm.

In 1909 Sam decided to return to the west. He rented the farm, leaving his wife and children there. Mrs.



Sam McNaught on the way to Edmonton, Sam Sargeant in the background.



Celebrating Mrs. Sam McNaught's 90th birthday with Mrs. Cage and Mrs. Ingledew, Mrs. Schenk, Mrs. Fletcher Smith. Standing, Mary Hunkin, son Dennis; Crosbie McNaught, Kath Funnell, Alma Kinsman.

McNaught was still teaching. He was this time interested in the Peace country, then being hailed as "The last great west".

He travelled by train to Edmonton, there joining for travelling companions with members of the Christian Association group. For more information, he and I. E. Gaudin requested an interview with a Dr. McKay, a well known man and an authority on the north country. Dr. McKay said he would allow them ten minutes but he and they became so interested the conversation lasted five hours and was very informative. The party bought oxen and sleighs and spent five days outfitting with supplies for a year. Sam's oxen were Devons with huge horns and were named Ben and Tig, these names being shortened forms of names from Greek mythology. Most of the hardware portion of the supplies was bought at the J. A. Werner store in Edmonton. This hardware store was still in operation in Edmonton three generations later.



The trail to their destination led 100 miles north to Athabasca Landing, across to Mirror Landing, Lesser Slave Lake to Grouard then Peace River Crossing. This was the Old Athabasca Trail. It crossed the Peace River again at Dunvegan then to Spirit River and finally Beaverlodge, where all the party settled except Mr. McNaught. He travelled ten miles farther on to the Red Willow country for the land he wanted. He was far ahead of the surveyors but he eventually got his choice.

He returned to Brantford on New Years, 1910, with plans to come back to the Peace country with the family, leaving the farm still rented and the furniture stored. Sam preceded Mrs. McNaught and children Crosbie and Mary to Edmonton, taking with him a young man who wished adventure and could drive a second team. They bought sleighs, prepared a caboose and got supplies.

Mrs. McNaught and the children came to Edmonton and the family began the long road to their new home. They left Edmonton on March 4, 1910 travelling the same Old Athabasca Trail as the group in 1909. They did not arrive at what was later Halcourt until July 10.

As they drove over Halcourt hill, Mrs. McNaught was entranced with the view of valley, the trees and river sweeping away to the mountains. After those long hundreds of miles she was happy to reach the log house and see the comfortable stable for the animals. These had been built by Sam the previous year.

Both Mr. and Mrs. McNaught had bought South African scrips, thus they could file on five quarters of land. This land still belongs to the family.

Mrs. McNaught was an ill-prepared pioneer as her life until that time had centred on teaching. However she learned the essentials and the life, although a great contrast, was much enjoyed.

Sam made at least two winter trips to Edmonton with oxen for freight of all kinds for himself and others. On the last trip he brought back some horses as well as the oxen.

In the winter of 1914-15 it was decided necessary to return to Ontario to sell the Brantford farm. The family drove to Edson accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Charles McNaught and Sam and Charlie's sister Miss Jane McNaught.

The Sam McNaught family returned from Ontario to their home at Halcourt in the spring of 1919. This time the journey was by train to Grande Prairie. A car load of settlers' effects included furniture and farm implements and a very large piano.

In 1931 Mary McNaught married Percy Hunkin who had farmed in the Leighmore district for five years. Percy was born in the Channel Islands, came to Canada when 17 and spent three years in British Columbia, at Shushwap Lake, Summerland and Kelowna respectively. He came to Grande Prairie and worked a year for I. V. Macklin before coming to the Leighmore district.

Mary and Percy built, have farmed and still live on one of the original McNaught quarter sections.

Sam McNaught passed away October 18, 1937. He was still active on the farm and also rode horseback

until nearly the end. He loved and understood horses so well it made his lifetime of farming happier. It was all in the era of horses for power and pleasure.

Crosbie for years had championed the cause of the Peace and North country, through letters to papers, prominent people and organizations, or attending meetings regarding matters of interest or progress.

Sensing the excitement and challenge of new developments, he became intensely involved in the coast outlet via Monkman Pass project. He was president of the Monkman Pass Highway Association for some time and played a leading role in the organization. This road was being built on a voluntary basis and so required much volunteer time, car mileage and unbounded enthusiasm. Crosbie gave his best in all of this.

Crosbie was always a man of broad interests. This in no way detracted from his progressive farming with registered seed and new varieties and keeping up with the latest advice from the Department of Agriculture. His fine herd of Shorthorns provided many a 4-H club member with their calf. Although his daily life was so filled, he was always quickly available night or day if anyone needed help in any way.

Mrs. McNaught passed away March 8, 1958 at 94, after being confined to a wheel chair the last 18 years. She remained bright until the last and keenly interested in her family, music, culture and world affairs.

In 1959-60 Crosbie rented his farm temporarily and went away to work. Scotty Gordon stayed on as "keeper of the house". Crosbie went first to work near Edmonton, but after a few months went to the Northwest Territories. He found carpentry work at Taurcasas Mines, Snare Falls, Ft. Rae and Yellowknife enjoying the interesting people he met and the country very much. Helping set up a tourist camp on Conjour Bay, Great Bear Lake, was of great interest.

Lastly he worked for the Department of Indian Affairs, supervising house building at Kakisa Lake. He was drowned in the Kakisa river July 16, 1962. It is significant of his interest and liking of all peoples that the Chief wished a cairn to be built in Crosbie's memory. Chief Simga's sons did this with rose and gray stones and it stands on the bank of Kakisa river near their village.

Also significant was that two months after his death his letter was published in the Family Herald regarding the cruelty of hot iron branding. It compared unfavourably with the chemical branding he had used for years, which caused little or no discomfort to the animals. Even later another letter was published in a magazine, protesting the cruelty of the steel traps when more humane methods could be used.

The Hunkin family consists of three sons and one daughter. Sam is a policeman, Robin an optician, Dennis a jeweller, now a buyer for People's Credit Jewellers, and Marjorie is a commercial artist.

Mary always enjoyed helping with the music part of the Christmas school concerts and also the festivals. At the time of the school consolidation Percy was and had been for some years a school trustee. The old



Halcourt 2835 school was no more but the County allowed one of the school buildings at Halcourt to be kept for a community hall.

Mary continued to teach music to children and takes pleasure from the feeling she has helped so many. She also feels she has made some fine young friends in this way. She still participates actively in the Anglican church services at Halcourt and Elmworth as organist.

Crosbie's farm is still rented to the same family as in 1959. The land won with so much difficulty in some ways is above all loved for its treasured memories. The courage and foresight of our parents leaves us a hope and a heritage in this our beautiful Land of the Mighty Peace.

#### **HUGH AND AGNES McNAUGHTON**

Hugh and his wife Agnes had a small part in the development of the Halcourt area. They arrived in March 1929.

Formerly from Ontario, they homesteaded as newly-weds in Saskatchewan, until drought and sandstorms drove them to seek a new home in the Peace.

With their son Peter, they arrived in Grande Prairie in March, 1927, spending two years on the Cal Campbell farm at Bear Lake before moving on to the Earl Jones homestead, west of Halcourt. They later resided on the old Liberty place, now known as the Norman Howarth farm.

Along with the rest of the settlers, they had the misfortune to run headlong into the years of the great depression, after leaving the prairie dustbowl. To compensate for this, they discovered a great community, with wonderful neighbours, including Grimmetts, Allisons, Ellingboes, Laings, Clelands, Dahls, Funnells, Blacks, Smiths and others.

Hugh and Agnes were members of the Halcourt United Church, which still stands on the hill. Agnes was also a member of the W.M.S. and Hugh a member of the Church Session. Hugh was prominent in the Social Credit Organization.

Hugh also derived a lot of enjoyment from curling at the Halcourt rink, in spite of some very cold and snowy trips by team and sleigh. They were both musical, and spent many happy evenings around their piano, which they had brought with them from Saskatchewan.

In 1942, they decided to take life a little easier, and moved to Vancouver. They returned to Beaverlodge to live in town in 1952, where they spent the rest of their days — Hugh passing away in 1955. Agnes lived with Jennie and Peter until her death in 1968.

#### **PETER AND JENNIE McNAUGHTON**

Peter was the only child of Hugh and Agnes McNaughton. Jennie, Peter's wife was the eldest daughter of William Martin of Gimle. Peter was born in Saskatchewan, coming to the Earl Jones homestead, west of Halcourt now, owned by Ivor Olson.

After the dirty thirties, Pete and Jennie bought the old Steve Bork quarter, now farmed by Sandy Smith, and the Belcher and Hedges quarter now owned by Ivor Olson. Later they rented the Jake Brissler land

and a quarter owned by Art Funnell. They also added a daughter Jean and a son Bill.

All this land was farmed by horses and Jennie did a man's work in spring and fall by handling four horses on the seed drill, disc and harrows, and the binder. Grandfather and grandmother McNaughton would come over to Peter's to get meals and to look after the little ones, leaving Jennie free to help Peter.

In the forties, cars and tractors began to appear on farms. Peter's was no exception. And by this time Jennie had younger brothers wanting to drive a tractor so she was able to devote more time to the house. Her beautiful embroidery stands a testimony to the good use she made of her time.

Many happy house parties were held in the McNaughton home in winter. One that particularly comes to mind was the christening of a new log addition. It was forty below, but all the neighbours turned out. The teams were pushed into the barn until it was packed. Attending were Dahls, Funnells, Williams, Smiths, Holmes, Gingles, Steeles, Ringstroms, Hattons, Beadles, Buckleys, Mulligans and of course all the Martins.

In the days of the binders and bundle stooking, threshing was a busy time. Neighbours all turned out to help and rarely did any crop stay out over winter. There was one outstanding year with 21 consecutive days of threshing. A rain break was almost welcome after that.

In 1946, the late Bill Adams and Tom Hazard purchased the farm and equipment of Peter and Jennie who with sincere regret left Halcourt for Ft. Langley, B.C. They returned to Halcourt in 1952, moving onto the Roy Demsky land, then owned by the late Jack Cox. They also bought Bill Perdue's farm. Later they moved to Beaverlodge, leaving daughter Jean and husband, Bill Clarke on the Demsky land, and son Bill with wife, Kathleen (Snooks) on the Perdue farm.

Peter became interested in Halcourt again and rented the farm of the late Crosbie McNaught from 1960-1964. At this time too he bought the Alf Bayer place on the Halcourt road. When Peter's father died, his mother lived with them and was happier when they were on the land again. When she died in 1968, she left a big gap in Peter's home.

While living on the Bayer land Peter also worked for Johnny Foster in the seed business. Peter and Jennie were very active in United Church, singing in the choir, working on the session, and in the U.C.W. Jennie also retained her membership in the Halcourt U.C.W. for many years. And whenever there was singing — there were the McNaughtons.

Peter and Jennie now reside in Penticton, B.C., returning to Halcourt to be with relatives and friends at festive occasions. In Penticton the McNaughton home is known as the Drop-In Centre for northern visitors. The welcome is truly hospitable.

#### **TOM METCALFE**

Tom and his family came from Manitoba over the Edson Trail with oxen in 1911 to take a homestead on the top of Halcourt Hill, midway between where the church is now and the cemetery.

At that time they had three children. In subsequent



years seven more were born. They had the first post office at Halcourt. Tom hauled the mail twice weekly from Beaverlodge. The eldest boy, Russel went to the first school, located at the top of the hill.

After nine years residence there, a move was made to Rio Grande. One item of interest was their horse-powered rotary wheat grinder for making flour.

One of the older daughters, Mrs. Eva Hansen resides in Grande Prairie.

#### HARRY OGREN

Arvid Harry Ogren, born June 28, 1907 in Smoland, Sweden came to this area in March, 1927. After being employed in farming in the Halcourt district and by Cady and Evans, Buffalo Lakes Lumber Co., he purchased land in 1929 in Hayfield which he farmed until 1965. Since then his efforts have been mainly in farming in the Halcourt district.

In 1951 he returned to Sweden and spent the winter there.

In 1956 he married Miss Dorothy Archer in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. They reside in the town of Beaverlodge and are members of St. Lukes Anglican Church. Dorothy is very active in the Willowlodge Chapter I.O.D.E., and in the Beaverlodge Craft Club.

In 1961 and 1962 Dorothy and Harry spent four months with Harry's mother and four sisters in different parts of Sweden, and again in the summer of 1971 they enjoyed another trip to Norway and Sweden.

Harry and Dorothy have a comfortable home in Beaverlodge.



Harry Ogren.

At Art Hall's on the Wapiti. Harry Ogren, Carson Dalglish, Jenny Cleland and Art.



#### STEWART AND GRACE PURVES — by Dorothy Bressler

Stewart Purves was born in Eyemouth, Scotland in 1877. As the son of a small hill farmer, his thoughts turned to a place where there was more land. In 1903 he emigrated with his wife and family to Minnedosa, Manitoba where he farmed. In 1912 his wife, Catherine, died leaving him with 5 small sons and twin daughters, all of whom with the exception of one daughter, are still living. After two unsuccessful years of trying to keep the family together, the children were taken by friends to be raised. Alone again, Stewart headed west and farmed at Lancer, Saskatchewan.

Grace Brownless, the youngest of ten children, was born in London, England in 1895. Her mother died when she was 3 years old and she was raised by an aunt and uncle who owned a shoe store. Being of an adventurous nature, she came to Canada with her brother at the age of 15. They lived and worked in Lachine, Quebec for a year. After the untimely death of her brother, she returned to England. But now England was too small and crowded for her so she worked and saved for a year and returned to Canada, to Toronto. In 1917 she came West to Lancer, Saskatchewan, as governess for two young children. There she met and married Stewart Purves on December 10, 1918.

After a winter in Vancouver, they moved to Salmon Arm, B.C. where he became foreman on the W-X fruit ranch. Two daughters, Grace and Dorothy were born. Philip and Jean joined the family at Canoe, B.C. on a small fruit farm. In 1927 the family moved to Mara, B.C. to a mixed farm where they spent the next three years. A friend and neighbor was very interested in the Peace River country, so the two men decided to investigate this new country where homesteads were to be had free.

The friend returned to his home but dad remained at Beaverlodge. He filed on a homestead at Goodfare and made plans for his family to join him. Meanwhile, he went to work taking care of a pig farm for Bill Adams of Beaverlodge. In August, 1930 the family stepped off the train at Beaverlodge. We went by team and wagon to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hurley Senior and Gordon for supper and then on to our own home five miles north of Beaverlodge. Four years were spent there and the homestead project was abandoned because it was too far to the nearest school. In 1934 we moved to Halcourt, to the "Richardson" place by the Red Willow river. These were depression times and the farm was too small to do more than barely eke out a living, but from the viewpoint of children, it was a great place to live. There were hills to roam on, a river to swim in and skate on, a place across the road for picnics and ball games and Sunday gatherings — now known officially as the "Red Willow Park".

In 1938 Grace married Hughie Gingles who was a well known farmer in the district. They had six sons and a daughter, all of whom still live in the district. Hughie passed away in 1965, a victim of emphysema. In 1970 Grace married Andy Koszan and they live in Beaverlodge.

I, Dorothy went to Edmonton in 1942 and later to





The Stewart Purvis family at the Red Willow.

Toronto, as a defense worker during the war. In April 1945, I married Ed Bressler, a Saskatchewan farmer serving in the Army. For four years we lived at Elmworth and Two Rivers, between 1947-51. We also have 7 children, two boys and five girls. After 20 years, mostly in Saskatchewan and Kamloops, we came back here in 1971 and farm at Halcourt.

Philip served his war years in the navy on a convoy ship, then came home to run the Elmworth store. Meanwhile dad and mother had left the river farm and farmed for 2 years at Hinton Trail.

During the war, while we younger three were far away, mother used to walk four miles to get the mail, and four miles back, twice a week. Now they go to Elmworth where mother was postmistress and dad helped in the store.

In 1947 a young lady from Crooked Creek, Florence Reimer, came to teach at Elmworth school. Romance blossomed and in July 1948, she and Phil were married. They had a son and a daughter. The daughter passed away. She was less than 3 years old. Later they moved to Grande Prairie and on to Peace River where they now live.

Jean worked in Edmonton for several years, then came home to help in the store at Elmworth. In 1949 she married Laverne Gillespie, the first wedding in the farmer-built church at Elmworth. They spent a year at Bluesky, then moved to Edmonton. They have a daughter and a son.

Early in 1953 dad became ill and passed away in March that year at the age of 75, a victim of cancer. At that time he and mother were caretakers of the new Consolidated School at Elmworth.

A year later mother moved into Beaverlodge and worked for a number of years in the Variety Store. This opened up a new phase in her life, because, thanks to modern hearing-aids, she now overcame the problem of deafness which had plagued her most of

her life, and she was able to enjoy meeting and working with people. During the 1960's she suffered a number of heart attacks which affected her health. In 1970 she moved to the Senior Citizens' Home at Hythe. Her health was failing, and in February, 1972, she passed on and is buried in the Halcourt cemetery, beside her husband and near her granddaughter.

#### **WILLIAM (SCOTTY) RAY**

I was born at Elkhorn, Manitoba on March 8, 1902 to parents George (Alex) and Margaret Ray. In 1911, I came to the Peace River country with my parents and sisters Mary, Jean, Edith and brother, Jack.

We came over the Edson Trail, leaving Edson in April and arriving in the Halcourt district in September. There were many hardships during that trip and in subsequent years. In 1928 we bought a mill and sawed lumber, and I bought a tractor and plow and did a lot of custom breaking, for five dollars an acre. I also did custom woodsawing, along with my farming.

In March, 1930, I married Helen Brown, daughter of Joshua and Jewel Brown. We lived on a homestead in the Two Rivers district for about five years, then rented and lived on Jim Dixon's farm until 1939.

In April of 1939 I bought Mrs. Longson's quarter and moved there, later buying Mrs. Moyer's quarter of land and the Christopherson quarter all in the Halcourt district.

I farmed there until November, 1966 and then moved into Beaverlodge, where we still reside. We have a family of three: Eldon, married to Thelma Schenk — they have two children, Gary and Rhonda; Gordon now married to Connie Reich — they have two children, Gordon Junior and Anthony (Tony); LaVerne married to Donald Dixon — they have two children, Beverly and Calvin (Kelly).

I mined coal for several years with a neighbor, Lawrence Cage.



My grandfather, James Ray, my uncle Bill Cowan, Emil Swanson and Andy Laing were our closest neighbours in the early years. Other neighbours were Jim Sinclair, the Walkers, Chapmans and Sam McNaughts.



Scotty Ray, 1930.



Eldon, Alex and Scotty Ray and Josh Brown.

## THE RICHARDSON FAMILY

Mrs. Alice Richardson, sons William and George, and daughter Marguerite moved from London, Ontario in 1919 to Carstairs, Alberta, and in 1920 to the Halcourt district. They bought the Allen McLean farm at the Red Willow river. Later Will, and George proved up homesteads and grants near Hinton Trail and Elmworth.

In 1922, Marguerite left to enter Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster, B.C. to train as a nurse. In 1925 she graduated with the General Proficiency medal. In the fall of 1925 she went on the staff at Grande Prairie hospital, where she worked until the fall of 1926, when she resigned and moved to New Westminster, B.C. with her mother. In 1927 Marguerite married Herb Rutledge. They moved back to the river place at Halcourt, where they lived for one year and then built a house on property at Hinton Trail.

In 1929 their daughter Georgina was born. They farmed at Hinton Trail until spring of 1934, when they, along with Mrs. Richardson and Will, sold out and moved to New Westminster, B.C. where Marguerite still lives.

Their daughter, Georgina, received her education in British Columbia. After graduating from high school, she also received her A.T.C.L. degree in violin and in 1955, she graduated from the Pentecostal Bible College in Mississippi, U.S.A. with her Bachelor of Theology degree. She married Troy Williams and has

two children, Albert Eugene and Sharena Anne. They now reside in Mobile, Alabama.

In 1924, George left Halcourt for Los Angeles but later moved to New Westminster, B.C. where he entered a mining, gas and oil business.

In 1931, Irene, Mrs. Richardson's eldest daughter, moved with her husband, Ed Cannon, to Halcourt to the river place, where they lived until 1934, when they moved out to New Westminster, B.C.

In 1953 George married Pauline Eickroff and now resides in West Vancouver. George used to hear Tom Russell talk about 'de fumes from de oil' but people used to think Tom imagined there was oil in the ground. In later years, as George was in the oil business, he realized Tom Russell was right.

In 1937 George went back to Halcourt to investigate the building of a road out the Old Monkman Pass as a short route to Prince George and the coastal area. Crosbie McNaught was very enthused about the prospects and they soon got organized to commence work. Several business men and farmers from Halcourt and Beaverlodge were behind this project. This road was not in vain because on this road is picturesque Kinuseo Falls, as tall as Niagara Falls in Ontario. This road is used by many gas companies today.

George is Manager Director of Peace River Petroleum, with properties in the Monkman Pass region. In 1957, Richfield discovered a gas well in this area and in 1964 a big gas field was found 10 miles south of Richfield. According to geologists and engineers, it promises to be the largest gas field in British Columbia. A valuable bed of coking coal has also been found since Monkman Pass was opened.

Mrs. Richardson died in 1949, Will Richardson in 1951, Herb Rutledge in 1957 — all in New Westminster. Irene Canon died in California, U.S.A. in 1970.

## JOHN ROMANOFF

John was born near Kiev, in southwest Russia in 1897. He recalls that his father was a building contractor and that as a boy he had a pair of skis which was quite unusual in that district. At the age of 15 years, with some friends he went to Austria, then Germany, then to Quebec and Sydney, Nova Scotia. There he worked in a limestone quarry for 12½¢ per hour. He could not speak English and wished that he were back home. War had broken out in Russia hence he couldn't go home. During World War I he worked for 18 months in the Sydney Coal Mines, then moved to Montreal where he secured work caring for remount horses which had been bought by the British Government. There were 55-70 horses per pen and John recalls that the mules would kick at the slightest provocation. Eventually he bought a farm near Peterborough and married Doris White of that city, granddaughter of James and Jane Booth, 1909 homesteaders at Halcourt. They arrived at Beaverlodge in the fall of 1930, in a snowstorm, rutted roads and wheat still in the stook. When they left Peterborough, they had finished picking the Northern Spy apples.

John brought in 2 cows, 2 calves, 2 dogs, farm machinery and household goods. Doris had five small children to care for. When she saw the country she





Ron Romanoff and his tame wolf.

could have taken the next train back to Ontario. To add to their misery the log house with the sod roof leaked. Has anyone ever told you the main feature of a sod roof? The skies rain for two days outside and the sod rains for four days inside.

Seven children grew up in that log house, which was replaced by a modern home in 1943. Mrs. Romanoff inherited her Grandmother Booth's love of flowers and can make anything grow. During the summer John and Doris spend their time landscaping their large yard and growing every flower and shrub that they can find.

Doris prefers to use the wood stove with a propane one in the shed for the summer. John's pastime used to be to visit John Gossen to talk Russian and about Russia.

Thurza White, Doris' sister, married Ben Cleland. Verna Romanoff married Tom Wilson of Vancouver, Thurza married Bill Thompson who lives on the former Nels Reid farm at Horse Lake, Ivan is a mechanic at Salem, Oregon and married Jan Zinhan. Mervyn, married to Amie Hommy, is a welder at Fox Creek. Lillian is married to Mike Silvaniuk, now of Beaverlodge. Cornelius married Mary Gittins of Bentley and now lives in Fort St. John. Ronald married Nadine Webber and lives in Fox Creek.

While still attending Halcourt school, Mervyn secured a wolf cub from the Belcourts at the Big Slough and kept it for two years as a pet. By that time it weighed 180 pounds. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon it would start to howl. That was the signal for John to turn it loose to meet the Romanoff family returning from school. Finally it was sent to the Calgary Zoo and labelled a black Siberian wolf. Two months afterwards a Game Warden called at the Romanoff farm to inform them that it was illegal for them to retain the wolf and that they would have to shoot it. The family was pleased that they had disposed of it otherwise.

In 1970 all the family were home for their parent's Fiftieth Wedding anniversary. There are 18 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

## RUECKERT — STEELE — by Chrissie Fraser

When our father, Gust Rueckert of German descent was killed in the coal mines at Luscar, Alberta, our mother, Catherine Rueckert, of Scottish descent decided to bring her two children, Chrissie and Julius to the Peace River country to homestead as this is what she and her husband had planned to do.

We left Calgary in October 1924 and came by train to Grande Prairie.

We were met there by Howarths, James and Harold, friends of our parents. They had brought a wagon and team to take us out to Halcourt and I remember how it snowed and rained all the way. Being from the city, we thought the open spaces and our different life quite exciting. Mother kept house for the Howarths. We went to the little log school at Halcourt and mother helped the teacher, Mrs. Harry Davis with the Christmas concert, including teaching a group of girls the Highland Fling and a square dance.

In the fall of 1925 mother married Harvey Steele who in 1916 had come over the Edson Trail with a team of oxen. We then moved to the Rio Grande district. Our half brother Alister was born in 1926.

We used to enjoy going to the Rio Grande Stampede. When my brother grew up, he participated in the rodeo events.

In 1938, I married William Fraser from Glasgow, Scotland and we went to the Two Rivers district to make our home. Now we live at Halcourt and have one daughter Margaret at home. Cathleen married Bill Dalglish and they have four children.

Julius was married to Jean Smith of Hinton Trail in 1948. They have two children. Linda married Tom Cramer and they are living at Pine Point, N.W.T. They have one boy. Kenneth lives in Grande Prairie and was married to Joann Carlstad of Valhalla Centre in June.

Allister was married to Kath Simmons in 1957. They have two children, Wayne and Sandra. They live at Creston, B.C.

Mother passed away on November 4, 1955 and our step-father six months later, May 4, 1956.

## ERWIN AND ANNA SCHENK

Erwin arrived in Canada from Kirchheim, Germany in 1911, and stayed two years at Davidson, Saskatchewan, coming to the Peace country and filing on the N.E. 30-70-10-W6 in what is now the Halcourt district.

Anna Rempis left Nabern, Germany, in 1926, coming to Vegreville to visit her brother Bill.

The following year Bill decided to come North and look for a homestead — preferably in the Wembley or Hythe areas, and Anna came with him. They met Erwin in Wembley and they all looked around for a homestead for Bill, but there was nothing suitable for him.

Erwin and Anna were married in 1927 by the Rev. Mr. Simons at the United Church in Wembley.

Erwin's bachelor shack looked pretty grim to Anna. It had two rooms — one was half full of wheat and the other contained two barrels of chop soaking for the pigs! However, Anna got busy here, and the place soon took on a different appearance! At this time Anna's only English was "Yes" and "No".





Coal mine on the Red Willow River.





Wood sawing crew at Erwin Schenks. Ben Dahl, Hugh Gingles, Elmer Dahl, Wyndham Smith, seated Mac Davis, Stanley Hovelevich.

Erwin was a good horseman, and had some good horses. He was very particular with his harness, keeping it always well oiled and repaired. He was also a splendid swimmer, and took great pleasure in watching over all of those in the water whenever picnics were being held at the Red Willow river.

Anna soon turned her energies to the garden. She always had at least two acres in vegetables. Most of these were taken to the Halcourt store and traded for things to eat and to wear. Whenever Nick Nasedkin came to buy the cattle, he always took back a load of vegetables also.

The family started to arrive in 1928, when Doris was born. Verna was born in 1929; Annie in 1932; Fred in 1934; Thelma in 1936; Helen in 1937 and Lorraine in 1942.

The winter of 1948-49 was a very hard one, made more so by the fact that, in the fall, Erwin suffered a very severe attack of inflammatory rheumatic fever, and was crippled up for the whole winter. The snow was very deep, and feed was pretty scarce. Anna, with help from the children, hauled nearly 30 loads of straw from Tom Funnell's farm, and had some really tough trips. Another regular chore was hauling water, and this was done mainly from Frank White's, as the river was frozen to the bottom.

The neighbours were very helpful — Percy Hunkin, Hugh Gingles and Foster Wartenbe bringing over loads of firewood when it was badly needed.

A new house had been built in 1939 and this was really appreciated by the whole family.

The family were members of the Anglican Church at Halcourt, and the children attended the Halcourt school.

In 1948 Verna married George Whitlock of Grande Prairie.

In 1952 Doris married Dr. Bob Eggen of Lethbridge.

In 1953 Annie married Allan Lowe of Beaverlodge.

In 1954 Thelma married Eldon Ray of Halcourt.

In 1960 Fred married Ilene Velve of Valhalla.

In 1963 Helen married Const. Jim Matthews of British Columbia.

In 1963 Lorraine married Const. Orest Oucharek of Saskatchewan.

Over the years there was lots of hard work, but there were also some good and happy times which made the difficulties more bearable.

The place was sold in 1954, and Anna and some of the family moved to Grande Prairie, where Erwin passed away in 1955 at the age of 67.

Anna loves it in Grande Prairie, and keeps busy with her various hobbies and club memberships.

## BOB AND FERN SHAW

Bob and Fern Shaw came in by Edson trail with their daughter, Mildred. Bob Shaw had at some time lost a leg. Mildred went to school for a few months at the Methodist church on the Halcourt hill.

Mildred married Asa Hunting and moved away. After Bob died, Fern lived at Lake Saskatoon, later Wembley.

## ARCHIE T. SMITH

Archie Thomson Smith was born in 1878 in Dunwich Township, near Dutton, Ontario. He was one of six sons and a daughter, of James D. and Margaret (Thomson) Smith. Archie married Jessie Robbins of Dutton in 1906. She was the daughter of William and Mary (Campbell) Robbins.

Prior to his marriage, Archie spent one winter logging near Utica, New York, and also worked for a few months as a fireman on the New York Central railroad. On the advice of an older friend who convinced him railroading was a hard life, he quit the railroad and returned to the family farm at Dutton.

In 1912, he filed on a homestead 50 miles south of Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, which was the nearest railway station. He returned to Ontario in 1913, sold his farm, and in 1914 moved his family to the homestead on the Prairies. Three of his brothers and their father also homesteaded in the same area. Continued drought, poor crops, gophers, grasshoppers, plus a varied assortment of other pests, forced the Smiths, one by one, to leave. All remained in the west, however, except the father, James D. Smith, who returned to his home in Ontario, recognizing very early that this particular part of Saskatchewan was not and probably never would be a productive farming area.

Finally in the spring of 1928, Archie with his wife and three of their five children, Irene, Harold and Stanley, moved to the Peace River and set up homesteading on a farm near Halcourt. At approximately the same time, two of the family, Wilbert and Jeanette, went back to Chatham, Ontario and made their home with Mrs. Smith's sister and brother-in-law, Oscar and Effie (Robbins) Campbell of Campbell's Funeral Service. Both Wilbert and Jeanette obtained their mortician's license, and in 1938 opened Smith's Funeral Service in Burlington. Stanley, the youngest of the family, left Halcourt in 1942 and joined his brother in Burlington. He, too, became a qualified mortician and is now in a business partnership with Wilbert and Wilbert's son Donald. Irene (Mrs. Wilbert Halls) lives in Beaverlodge; Harold A., a World War II Veteran, lives in Peace River; Jeanette is in Vancouver, having returned to Canada from Seattle, Washington in 1968.

During the early years, the Archie Smiths endured many hardships, as did many other pioneers. There were very few of the basic comforts. Phones were eventually installed in the rural area by the farmers themselves. It was nice to be able to 'Ring up' the neighbor and say "Hello there, how are you?" It was a great pleasure to all who participated. Anyone who has

been "IN THERE from OUT THERE" will understand why those who moved to the beautiful Peace River district stayed there.

Archie and Jessie Smith sold their Halcourt farm in 1952 and retired to Beaverlodge. Archie, following a short illness, died on October 9, 1957 in Beaverlodge, and his wife Jessie followed him on May 13, 1963. Both are interred at Grande Prairie.

#### **HERBERT SMITH**

Herbert Smith of Dutton, Ontario and Violet Graham of Owen Sound were married in Regina in 1917. He was a steam engineer by trade. They farmed in the Arcola, Saskatchewan area during the beginning of the terrible dust storms.

After reading letters in the "Free Press" Home Loving Hearts pages describing the wonderful "Green Belt" in the Peace River country, they loaded a car of settler's effects and came north in 1926. Rex Ireland directed them to land adjoining that of Mr. Isaac Lambert in Halcourt. The excellent grain and garden yields, together with an abundance of wild fruits, and the wagon trips with the Frank Morrison family to gather blueberries along the Wapiti remain as very happy memories. However, Herb became acutely allergic to the soda element in the water, so they sold and moved to the Black Duck district, north of Fairview. Here Herb served on the district school board, and took care of an Illustration Station, which became involved in the initial testing of Saunders wheat. Their daughters Olive Mehlsen and Effie Jabbs are living on farms in the Fairview area.

In 1954 Herb retired and the family moved into Fairview. They often visited the Archie Smith family in Beaverlodge. In 1956 Herb suffered a fatal heart attack. His widow, "Aunt Vi", was a strong, active person, given to travelling and enjoying her Canasta Club, the United Church, and W.A., until a month before her death in 1968. The family always had a great love of this Peace River country, and if an epitaph were in order, theirs would be "Happiness is living in the Peace River country".

#### **EMIL SWANSON**

Emil Swanson came from Minneapolis in 1912 over the Edson Trail on the mail stage.

He first took up a homestead at Pouce Coupe. While he was digging a well there a halfbreed came along and said, "You are three miles from the Pouce Coupe river. You will find no water!" Emil abandoned that homestead on the Indian's advice.

That fall he walked out to Edson and worked for three months for the North West Telephone Co. He came back in March and filed on his present land. He hired Tom Metcalf to break ten acres of land and he went to work at the Van Horne sawmill on the Wapiti. In the winter he drove out to Edmonton for his grub stake. The following summer he did railroad work at Smith on Lesser Slave Lake. He was there when the first World War broke out.

He returned to the homestead and proceeded to put up some buildings. In the fall he dug a well. The temperature went down to forty below. He had to go down the well to chop the ice. One day he fell in up to

his neck, his clothes were of course frozen stiff before he got into the house.

While he was working at the Van Horne sawmill, he and a friend went ten miles up the Wapiti, where they built a raft and started down river. All went well for two or three miles until a big log barred the way; the raft upset, Emil clung to one side and climbed on. His friend was some distance away and had to swim back. They lost both rifles and their hats. They had no poles to control the drift. They remembered where there was a big rock jutting out into the river about two miles downstream so they rode it out and were able to jump off onto the rock.

In the winter of 1916-1917 Emil was out trapping to the south-west with Art and Walter Chapman until the snow became too deep and they ran out of grub. They started home! It took them three weeks to come home, subsisting on the odd rabbit and squirrel.

Emil has raised a lot of wheat over the years, has had no crop failures but was hailed out 100% in 1951 along with many others.

Emil is an immaculate housekeeper and cook. He is also a great card player — Bill Alexander was a favorite opponent. Emil never misses a Military Whist party. He still resides on his farm at Halcourt. Emil has so many stories to tell that it is a pleasure to visit with him.

#### **HAROLD TAYLOR**

Harold Taylor arrived in 1915 with the Clelands from Osgoode, Ontario and homesteaded N.E. 7-71-10-W6. He joined the Armed Forces in 1917, was wounded in France and returned to Canada. Finally, he sold his farm to Otto Holter and returned to Osgoode. There he married and had two children. He died in 1960.

#### **DAVE THOMPSON**

Dave came to Canada from Ireland in 1912. He was in Toronto until 1915 when he moved to Hardisty and homesteaded. In 1928 he came to Beaverlodge. In 1929 he homesteaded S.W. 27-70-10 W6, east of Gingles and south of Beaverlodge, and later acquired N.W. 22-70-10. In 1960 he sold out and moved to Beaverlodge and purchased an acreage.

Dave threshed for Bagnells for many years. He worked out a lot and grew a large patch of strawberries and raspberries. He was justifiably proud of his splendid garden. He kept to himself, never caused any trouble, made himself a good living and worked hard all his life.

Presently he has proved his ability as a gardener by turning a piece of raw land across the tracks at Beaverlodge into a green oasis.

#### **WALTER WALDO — by Pearl Cook**

My memories of Walter Waldo are few; but the picture I recall as a child is of a little old man wearing a floppy sombrero sitting astride a little old mule and jogging down the road with a twisted cigarette in his mouth.

A story is told of how one St. Patrick's night, at the hall, in the early hours of the morning, Walter and a few characters were celebrating and someone suggested playing a prank on Walter. They tied poor old Walter on his mule backwards, then turned the



mule loose! One person, not in on the joke, had started for home but fell by the wayside instead. When he awoke from his slumbers he was startled to see what he thought was an apparition before him! He let out a yell, and hollered "I must be in Jerusalem. There goes someone on a mule." Someone, somewhere, knows the life story of this little man; but he has been gone a long time now.

One time, at a dance in the Rio Grande hall, (our hall is beside the Catholic cemetery) someone had taken on more than he could hold, so what better place to sleep it off than in the cemetery! He awoke with a yell, a wild yell, to see the ghostly form of this little man sitting on his mule and staring at him! I am sure he thought he was in Hades for he burned the ground in his haste to get out of there!

Mrs. Waldo will always be remembered as one of the "early angels of mercy" as a midwife. Many an early settler's wife had to depend on her ability to bring safely into the world some of our now grown and married sons and daughters. Because of her and others like her many of the writers of stories for our book are here to do the job.

Walter Waldo will also be remembered, and these few lines will help to keep his memory alive in the hearts of all who knew him.

#### THE WALKER BROTHERS

The Walker brothers, Harry and Russ, early settlers of the Halcourt district, came from Ontario and were two of a family of six children. Their father, Andrew had emigrated from Ireland and their mother from Scotland.

Russ was working on his first job at City Steam Laundry at Collingwood, Ontario when the urge to go west arose. He started out April 6, 1909. After stopping briefly at Brantford and Winnipeg, working for 10 days for C.N.R. for \$1.40 a day in Vermilion he arrived in Edmonton April 30th. He set up a tent on the corner of Jasper Avenue and Ottawa Street, now 93rd Street. The next few months were filled with many jobs — some of them bridge building, all the way to Morinville, Mirror Landing and Athabasca Landing. In September he gave his earnings to his brother Harry as a half share in the outfit they'd need to head for the Great Peace River country.

Harry and another brother, Percy had come out west first and were working on the railway west to the Crow's Nest Pass. Harry was adventuresome enough

to have been in the Boer War in South Africa. After the war he had taken up sheet metal work in Toronto until the "New Land" beckoned.

In the winter of 1909 Harry drove a team of bulls with "80 hundred of freight 'grub stake' and bacon" for the Hudson Bay Post at Lake Saskatoon. When the snow and ice went in the spring he looked the country over, took the numbers of choice filings and left. He made his way by walking, rafting and walking to Grouard where he filed for himself and for Russ as the latter wasn't old enough. That September they outfitted two teams of oxen, wagons, and a milk cow and start out over the long and only summer trail. The route went by the Athabasca, Grouard Trail. They arrived in the Red Willow country later named Halcourt (after Harry Halcourt Walker) in 1910.

When they stopped over at the Protestant Mission at Lake Saskatoon to rest their weary animals a blizzard was blowing. There, Russ renewed his acquaintance with the Rev. C. H. Hopkins whom he had met the year before at Athabasca Landing. After many visits by the Rev. Mr. Hopkins to the Beaverlodge area, and on out to the settlers, a site was picked on the corner of Harry's land on the hill to build the first Protestant church in the Peace River country. This was accomplished in 1911 with both brothers helping. The first school was built across the corner and then the first post office. Russ served many years on the school board.

This was the beginning of a long citizenship in the community of Halcourt. The usual log cabins or sod-roofed shanties were built. Breaking land and starting the "proving-up" process had begun.

In 1913 Harry married Hazel Chapman who had moved into the country from California. In 1910 the Chapmans were in Portland, Oregon when they saw posters depicting the wonders of the Peace River country.

Harry was known far and wide for his tinsmithing skills. In a pioneer settlement this far from the outside world he was in demand for making everything from stove pipes to bathtubs.

In the summer of 1914 a stir was caused in the valley when Dave Wartenbe and his party arrived. Any man coming with seven pretty daughters was most welcome in a land of lonely bachelor settlers. He also had his wife along, his small son, Foster, brothers Claude and Van and one son-in-law Bert Wetherill.

Russ was lucky enough to win the hand of Agnes. They were married April 17, 1916 and honeymooned by team to Pouce Coupe!

The years of toil and hard work which followed were somewhat lightened by their enjoyment of people. Their little log cabin became a stopping place for many on their long trips from Rio Grande to Lake Saskatoon, Wembley and Grande Prairie. Chief Shetler and his Indian Band often stopped over too.

For many years Russ did breaking for others. One such deal was "have agreed to break 10 acres for Jack Gionett @ 4.25 per — to be paid when possible." Jack's homestead was nearby but others were as far away as Mountain Trail. A threshing outfit moving from farm to farm going as long as possible into winter was part of their life.



Agnes Walker on the family tractor.



Russ pitched ball on the first organized ball team and participated in Lake Saskatoon skating parties. Agnes played basketball on the early girls' teams. This was a mother and daughters' accomplishment as Annie and Irene played also. Many social evenings were enlivened by Harry's violin, Russ's banjo and Agnes and Russ singing. They loved to dance and in contests of old-time dancing often were winners.

Harry soon organized an orchestra of himself, Earl Jones and Herb O'Brien. They were popular all around, helping pass the long winter evenings in homes and school houses.

A good sense of humor must have been a prerequisite for survival. The Walkers were so blessed. The children of Russ and Agnes recall hearing of "tree squeaks" and "moon dogs." Their dad was often "going to Nose Mountain for a load of switches to keep them in line." Earliest memories of their mother were her faith in God and her fellowman and her singing "Snow Deer", "Red Wing" and "O My Pretty Quadroon." Early memories of dad were his ear to the radio for Gangbusters and the beloved hockey.

Early memories of Harry were his great story telling and of course the fiddle playing. Both families went on great camping and berry picking excursions away to the Wapiti — much to the enjoyment of all the kids.

The family born to Hazel and Harry numbered eight, some of whom were still pretty small when their dad passed away. Lola was the first and she died as an infant. Ida is the widow of Bill Alexander and lives at Fort Saskatchewan. Rex was married and lived in Ontario until his early death in 1960. Loy lives on the family farm with his mother home with him for the summers. Alma (Himmel) lives in Michigan. Jim married Norma Wenzel. They live in Dawson Creek and he works for the Department of Public Works. Leita, married to Bill Timms in Edmonton, works in Woodward's City Centre. Hollis is married and is an upholsterer living in Calgary. The grandchildren number 17. Jim, Loy and Hollis inherited their father's talent for music and play instruments beautifully.

The family that came along to keep Russ and Agnes busy over the years were seven girls and two boys. Annie became a teacher and married Art Dixon. They lived mostly in Beaverlodge until his untimely death in 1964. She is presently teaching in Germany after many teaching assignments all over the world as well as Beaverlodge. Son Ivan died as an infant. Irene (Vipond) is busily farming at South Dawson and Arras, B.C. Dr. Alvin has multi-degrees after his name, the last one being a Fellow of Psychiatry. He practises in a clinic in San Bernardino and works in Pacific State Mental Hospital, California. Lillie is assistant post master of Beaverlodge and owner of the old homestead at Halcourt. Mona, married to Bud MacLean, an electrician from Manitoba, teaches secretarial courses in the vocation school in Whitehorse, Yukon. They moved there for a "short" stay 19 years ago! Betty, ex-banker but still bookkeeper, married Jack Gaudin and they seem firmly rooted to Beaverlodge. Ruby is a legal secretary and office manager for her lawyer husband, Dennis

Mitchell in Dawson Creek. Shirley, a nurse, is married to Bill Lamb of Lamb Ford Sales, Camrose, Alberta.

The grandchildren of Russ and Agnes now number 25, the majority of them born too late to be acquainted with their pioneer grandparents.

## WARTENBES

Dave Wartenbe arrived at Halcourt in 1914 with his wife, seven daughters, a small son Foster, his brothers Claude and Van and a son-in-law Bert Wetherill. They came with horses and a covered wagon over the Edson Trail.

They stayed in the Halcourt area for a couple of years then moved on to a place just south of Dawson Creek, leaving Agnes behind as Mrs. Russ Walker.

Later Beryl returned and became Mrs. Ben Dahl, Mattie — Mrs. Bill Perdue, Addie — Mrs. Percy Stone until Percy's death and later, Mrs. Charlie Adams.

It seems that the Dawson Creek area then became too settled because they moved to a very remote and lonesome area called Lone Prairie. On B.C. maps one can see the high table-topped mountain between Lone Prairie and the Hart Highway that is named Wartenbe Mountain. Dave Wartenbe later settled on the hillside at East Pine, where an Esso service station now stands, and lived there until just before his death. Descendants of the Wartenbes and Wetherills are in and around Groundbirch. Irene (Wartenbe) Madden lives there yet. Bernice Hiebert is in Dawson Creek. Mattie and Bill Perdue are in Calgary. Addie Adams is in Burnaby, B.C. May, Beryl and Agnes have passed away.

Foster Wartenbe, the only son, married Caroline Baker and lived for years at Halcourt. After working for Bill Perdue for several years and for Ben Dahl he bought the land from Ben Dahl. They farmed there for about 20 years being active members of the community. Foster served in the army during the war.

He was known as quite a horse "skinner," deft with the reins when hauling coal from Dunbar's mine in winter or driving a fast team on a binder. The local blacksmith at Halcourt used to call on Foster's help when he had unruly horses to shoe.

In 1968, the Wartenbes sold their farm. Carrie and Foster and their three children, Alice, Morgan and Allen and their families are in Edmonton. Alice has taught in Beaverlodge and is doing further study at university. Morgan is with an oil company and Allen with the Provincial Motor Vehicles Branch.



Agnes Wartenbe and Russell Walker marriage, April 17, 1916.



## MISS OLIVE WATHERSTON O.B.E.

There was a desperate need for medical and nursing services in the Beaverlodge Valley about 1920 and at the demands of the women of the district, Miss Lemoin O'Neill was established as a district nurse in 1921. Following her marriage in 1922 to Walter Funnell, Miss Olive Watherston was sent in to take over the post.

Miss Olive Watherston had an interesting background. She was born at Hinckley, England, the last of 10 children of Reverend Alexander Law Watherston, headmaster of Hinckley Grammar school. Miss Watherston served overseas in two World Wars with the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service and was decorated by the British government.

At Halcourt she was established in a comfortable "shack" and served her district by means of "Archibald", a stalwart horse which on occasion might try to dislodge his rider with the result that "rubbers would fly and hair pins would scatter." Archibald was labelled an "Anglican horse in a United Church pasture" indicating the district support for the nursing service. It was routine for Miss Watherston to be called out at any time of day or night and on the way be urged to make side calls. And on her return there was frequently a note pinned to the door telling of another call. Emergency rations in her pack sack was a routine.

Probably the highlight of her professional career was the so-called "Tonsil Day" at Halcourt when youngsters from far and near would be relieved of this unwanted appendage under the supervision of Miss Watherston and the nearby doctor, either Dr. L. J. O'Brien of Grande Prairie or Dr. A. M. Carlisle of Lake Saskatoon. Under makeshift conditions in the United Church, it was a case of snip, snip for 100 youngsters about to start school. Those held in waiting might look in the windows on the bloody affair and head for the bush in panic only to be rounded up by their elders and placed back in line. When an adult living nearby was treated accordingly in her own home, Dr. Carlisle would wait out the shock by sitting at the piano and singing the wartime songs of the "Dumbells" of which he was a member in wartime France.

Miss Watherston left Halcourt, attended the University of Alberta and later served at Whitecourt. She retired in Victoria with her brother, Edmund formerly of Barrhead near neighbors of Dr. and Mrs. Carlisle. She died suddenly in 1969, shortly after the Carlisles had given a dinner party in her honor on her 80th birthday. Dr. Carlisle proposed the toast:

Here's a wee verse — to a grand district nurse,

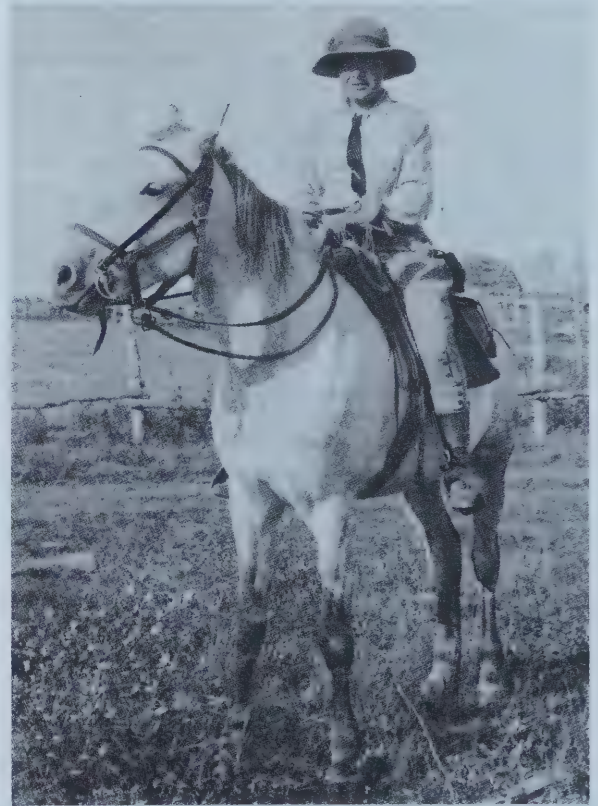
And a friend of our whole family,  
And who was once sent — by our government

To work in our northern country.  
She settled far west — where the roads weren't the best,

And her name was Miss O. Watherston  
And as no one out there — had a dollar to spare

The doctors were not bothersome.  
When a night call would come — no matter whom from,

She would answer it promptly we're told,  
And leave with her sack — on a big horse's back  
No matter how dark or how cold.  
She soon made a name — and the sick and the lame  
And mothers with children galore  
Were never afraid — to call for her aid  
Or cluster 'round her cabin door.  
She's a great pioneer — with a wondrous career  
And two wars to look back upon.  
She's done everything — and even our king  
Did honour to Miss Watherston.  
We're glad she is here — and that we live near  
For the coming event of the week,  
For tomorrow's the day — she'll be eighty they say.  
Let's give her a cheer, she's unique.



District Nurse Olive Watherston on her horse, Archie.

## ROBERT LEE WHEATLEY AND MOLLIE

Robert Wheatley was born in Dungannon, Scot County, Virginia in 1889. In 1910 at the age of 21 he headed north to Canada and arrived in Moose Jaw. He and a buddy biked to Aneroid, 60 miles east of Swift Current. He filed on a homestead which he proved up with oxen. He also used oxen to freight his wheat to Swift Current. One night he returned home from a freighting trip and found the neighbor's oxen had "horned" down his sod shack.

In the fall of 1917 he went back to Virginia to visit his folks. In the spring of 1918 he married Mollie Moore of Nickelville, Virginia and brought his bride back to the farm in Aneroid until 1927 when he sold it. The dry years and the grasshoppers drove him out. After sell-



ing he bought a garage at Hazenmore, Saskatchewan which he operated for a couple of years, then made plans to come to the Peace River country. As well as farming, he did carpenter work and helped build the first round house at Swift Current as well as railway stations. Mollie organized a basketball team in Aneroid as well as teaching their son Leonard as he was too young to go to school. He was able to enter Grade 3 after three months trial.

In the spring of 1930 Robert came by car to look at the Peace River country he had heard so much about. While he was here he built the first store at Hinton Trail which was run by Suttons. He returned to Hazenmore on October first. They loaded their belongings and the four children into the truck and started for Peace River. The truck was so heavily loaded it kept breaking down. When they arrived at Dunvegan, the ferry had just been taken out for the winter because of ice. They stayed several days at the Hudson Bay store until the ferry was put back in. They got half way across the river when the ice jammed the ferry. The ferryman's helper used the motor boat to shove the ferry upstream, then let it drift to the other side. When they got across the ferryman said to Mollie, "Madam, did you know you nearly went down the Peace River?"

After a couple of days stay in Grande Prairie they arrived at Hinton Trail with 50 cents in their pocket. In March of '31 they moved to Halcourt. Robert overhauled cars and used the first blacksmith shop there. He also was a sawyer for a sawing outfit and hunted and trapped.

In 1934 Robert filed and proved up land in the Hazelmere district. Times were hard and they had to

make do. Six dollars a month relief money from the government helped a little. Mollie says she even had to patch the patches. Tom Williams says, "Mollie could put on more patches than anyone else."

Mollie ordered a spinning wheel from Sifton, Manitoba. "Anything I could make out of wool, I made, even made two-piece underwear for Robert. I sewed all the clothes we wore, and made shirts for George Martin when he was in the bank in Edmonton."

When Leonard was 17, he needed a new pair of pants so he went to work for two months at Floyd Stickneys as a milkman; his wages — a purebred Holstein calf. He also worked for Murray Lay's Uncle Bud, this time for good wages, paid in cash. Bud Lay had a huge strawberry patch and Leonard picked strawberries for his mother. When he worked for Elmer Dahl he was paid with money but when he worked at Wanham he took horses, the beginning of our livestock. He helped build the annexes on the Sexsmith elevators.

There were four children. Leonard, the eldest was overseas from 1939-45. He is an excellent musician. His wife, Mildred is his bookkeeper. They have 11 children, some of whom are very musical. Frances Nichol is the second child. Robert Junior was wounded in World War II. He returned and married Colleen Cage. They have three fine boys and live at Mill Bay, B.C. where they have a market garden and Bob is doing carpenter work. May, the youngest is at home.

In 1958 the Wheatleys retired to Beaverlodge. Ten years later in 1968 they celebrated their 50th anniversary. Robert died April 24, 1970 at 81 years.

## FRANK WHITE

Frank White was originally from Peterborough, Ontario but he had been in the west a number of times, at Winnipeg when Red River carts were still in use and in Edmonton he had been connected with a livery barn business.

He came to the Peace River country in 1911 with oxen, accompanied on that trip by Mr. and Mrs. James Booth, friends from Peterborough.

Frank homesteaded on the NE 36-70-11. He soon became well-known for his humour, his neat and clean log house and many stories are told of his hospitality and entertainment.

He took pleasure in a straight furrow and a fine stand of wheat, and in the fruit and vegetables grown in his garden. Many a neighbour was delighted with a fine trout he had caught when getting water from the Red Willow river. In his farming, he soon changed from oxen to horses and these were beautifully kept and groomed. He was good company and always a welcome visitor and was also well known as a host. His "sour dough" pail hung from the rafters and produced good pancakes. His bread was equally delicious. He wore his Christy-stiff hat with a proprietary air on special occasions.

His stories were quoted, and mis-quoted far and wide. One of the best known was the time when Rev. C. H. Quarterman prepared to bow his head as he sat down to the meal and said, "Do you mind if I say a few words?" The answer was "Say any d - - - thing you please, there isn't a woman within a mile." He had one



Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wheatley's 50th Anniversary, 1968. Robert, Frances, Mollie Wheatley, Robert Wheatley, Mae, Leonard.



Robert Wheatley's outfit grinding grain.



annual ritual; he liked his green neck-tie pressed on March 16 so that it would be ready for St. Patrick's morn.

Another story told of Frank — it seems Frank had an unpaid loan at the bank so the bank took a lien against his wheat crop. When the bank threatened foreclosure Frank is said to have taken his wheat to the bank on a Saturday and shovelled it into the manager's office.

In his later years he lived in Grande Prairie, then in a Home near Edmonton. He was over 90 when he passed away.



Mr. and Mrs. James Booth with Frank White beside oxen. Leaving the Brunswick Hotel in Edmonton 1911 for the Peace River Country.



Mr. and Mrs. James Booth beside their original log cabin.



Pallbearers at the funeral of James Booth, 1918. T. Funnell Sr., Jim McGovern, Sam McNaught, Frank White, Elmer Dahl, Roy Cleland.

## ED WILLIAMSON

Ed Williamson came to the Halcourt district in 1929 and bought Victor Burt's half section. He was a bachelor and always had a lot of men helping and staying with him. He ran a threshing outfit and did custom chopping. In later years, he worked with Rusty Johnstone in the Hinton Trail district. He was Councillor for District 5 of the Municipality of Rio Grande, Halcourt and Hinton Trail for several years.

He died in hospital about 1968.

## JAMES YOUNG

Jimmy Young came over the Edson Trail with oxen in 1914 from Lampton County, Ontario and lived west of the Halcourt store for 10 years before moving to the Rose Prairie district, north of Fort St. John. He was a horse trader and was a partner with a man named Andrews, a school teacher in the first trading post at Kelly Lake.

In 1924 with his partner and George White with Sam Wilson as a guide he took a herd of horses over the mountains to the Brewster Brothers in Jasper Park.

Jim Young was the second settler in that newly developing district, Rose Prairie, many miles from railroad, and thus was twice a pioneer. Among other things he hauled the mail by horse and buggy from Fort St. John to Rose Prairie for ten years.

Jim married "that red-head" Angharad Meiron, who became one of the first Red Cross Nurses in the North Peace. In fact, the Youngs were "first" in many ways, and were particularly outstanding in community leadership.

## NOSTALGIA

Halcourt did have its full share of individuals who dared to be different, and some who were borderline in social behaviour. Tom Williams, for instance was given to mild exaggeration at times but when he secured an order for 100 fence posts for a friendly Indian lad, he inadvertently talked of 10,000 posts and had half the Indians west of Halcourt camping in his yard!

Also there are various ways of communicating. One year the ladies of the Halcourt Methodist church decided not to charge for its annual turkey supper. The reason was that none of the congregation had any money.

Which takes us to Frank White and his William Tell story. If you do not know it already, Halcourt will tell it.

Russ Walker could tell a story well, and add to it with the postlude "Now this is the truth." His fine Spencerian writing was well known but when he countersigned a cheque resting on the wheel of his plough the bank teller refused to accept it as the writing was not up to Russ' high standard. Brother Harry once sold fresh eggs to Gaudin's store for 2 cents a dozen and noted that the retail price indicated 300 per cent profit.

The Cage family could, and did entertain for hours with their unusual slants on life. On the Edson Trail

breakfast started with a water pail full of pancake batter and the family ate out of it all day. One day on the trail they travelled all day and by evening were still in sight of their last camp fire. And when an Irish friend told about a certain tree, "It was just a wooden one."

The house was small and the several brothers were sent to the granary to dress for the dance. The building was cold and without light. Nevertheless, they struggled into their best suits. At the dance one of them felt the legs of the underwear creep up, the arms lengthen and the neckline bulging uncomfortably. He tried to be nonchalant but it seemed a losing battle to cope with it all. Finally he understood; he had the "long johns" on upside down.

### THE LIGHTER SIDE

We start with Frank White. When a passerby wanted to buy a bushel of potatoes, Frank refused to sell, "I won't cut a potato in two for anyone." As for feeding the Minister's horse Frank insisted that his own oats be used; he didn't trust a Minister not to come with wild oats.

Then there was the genial Halcourt bachelor who would share a meal with anyone — until he went to the Beaverlodge hospital. His situation demanded a blood transfusion and a Scottish donor contributed.

Thereafter our bachelor friend suffered a change of attitude. He was no longer quite so generous. After a second visit to the hospital he was even worse and after the third, down right canny.

Friends attributed the change to the blood dilution, the Scottish influence is dominant.

When Frank of Elmworth was on his way to the Halcourt store, neighbor Jim asked him to buy a month's supply of coffee beans. "I want the good ones. Be sure to get the best." Thus armed Frank approached the storekeeper Arthur Funnell, who was certain he could oblige.

With scoop in hand Art reached under the counter and came up with a sample, from the one bag in stock.

"Try these",

"Not bad", said Frank, "What else have you got?" A shift to the right, with scoop in his left hand Art came up with a second offering.

"Try again", said Brewer. Then a shift to the left, with scoop in right hand Funnell came up with a generous-sized sample and a winning smile.

"Fine" said Frank, "I wanted your best."

Earl Cage selected his stories well and told them with utmost sobriety. Such as the one about their new hired man. With his strong right arm he would swing an axe to the left and then to the right, leaving a lane of felled trees in his wake. Soon the homestead would be cleared.

Earl, as a youngster, was fascinated by such a feat and would engage the hired man in conversation in the evenings.

"You have travelled a lot. Where did you cut trees before you came to the Peace?"

"Oh, I worked for awhile on what is now known as the Sahara Desert."

Should we alert the Environmentalists?

It has been told that in homestead days the cotton flour sack reigned supreme; it was made into dresses, shirts, underwear. Usually it was bleached but when the Halcourt lady appeared with the bloomers of the day under a skimpy dress the miller's trade mark was still visible, though slightly faded. This led to speculation: was it Five Roses they saw or Robin Hood? Those who knew the lady insisted that it was Purity!

The two men were neighbors, and pals of a sort. But something happened and their friendship ended, even to them taking pot shots at each other. Eventually one was creased by a bullet and the two faced each other in court in Grande Prairie. Joe was fined for his act, which was bad because he had no money. No matter, Pete paid the fine even though his wound was still painful. But now Pete faced reality in that he did not have a ride home, so Joe obligingly offered him a ride in his buggy.

We presume that by the time they reached Halcourt and home they were good friends again.

It was a short honeymoon trip, from the bride's home to the groom's bachelor shack, half a mile away. Enroute the groom boldly asked the bride if she had any money.

"Well, yes, but not very much."

"Give it to me", was the command. The bride's purse was opened and its contents, 45 cents was handed over. The groom promptly threw it into the road ditch, as if in disdain.

"But George. I don't understand. Why did you do that?" cried the bride.

"I just didn't want people to think that I married you for your money."







Enough saskatoons for the Jack Smiths?



Jack Harcourt with Dan and Ted, 1943.



# HAYFIELD

## ALFRED BURGESS

Alfred Burgess was born on a farm on the east side of Edmonton just before you enter what is now Sherwood Park. The buildings are still there. When Alfred was two years old his mother and father decided to move back to England. There were two older brothers, Walter and Arnold and two younger, William and Lawrence. There was also one younger sister, Olive.

When Alfred was 29 he and his brother Arnold decided to come to Canada again and farm. By this time Alfred had been married for several years and had a daughter Kathleen and a son Lawrence.

Alfred and Arnold left England in March 1930 to find a farm and built a house for their respective families. They bought a Model A Ford and drove up to the Beaverlodge area. Alfred found the farm he liked in the Leighmore district and Arnold settled in the Two Rivers district.

Alfred rented the Earl Jones' farm which had a log house on it and then he helped Arnold build a house on his farm.

Both Arnold's wife, Bessie and their three children and Alfred's wife, Beatrice and their two children arrived in Beaverlodge in September of that same year. Frank Dawson brought Mr. Lambert's car into Beaverlodge for Alfred's family and Arnold took his family home in the Model A.

As Alfred didn't have the car any more Arnold and Bessie used to bring them groceries. This was quite a change for Mrs. Burgess who had lived in a city all her life and had never made bread the way it had to be

made with dried yeast. Arnold finally bought a new car and Alfred kept the Model A and was still driving it in the 1940's.

For many years the mail came to George Beadles which was called "Leighmore Post Office". Then it was moved to several farm homes before the present rural route came into being.

The following year Alfred, with the help of his brother Bill, who lived at Calmar, started to build the present house on the S.W. quarter 14-71-11-West of 6th. As this farm had very little land cleared there were many hours of back breaking work with a grub hoe, team and logging chain to get rid of all that bush.

Mr. Gill helped Alfred dig their first few feet of a new well then they drilled the rest by hand. This well produced very good water, although it was hard. This same well also acted like a barometer. Air would blow up out of it and when the weather changed it would suck air down.

There wasn't a school in that area when Kathleen was of school age so she went and stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Bill Liberty all week and came home on weekends. She attended the Rio Grande school for one year and until Easter the following year when they opened a school in a farm house and the following year the men of the district got together and built the Hayfield school out of logs. The children thought this was really something special. The desks were homemade, also cut out of wide boards.

Alfred and Beatty's second daughter Marion was born at home in 1934 with Mrs. Holmes from the Rio Grande area as nurse. In 1939 their youngest son Ernest was born in the Maternity Hospital up at the "Old Town".

Alfred rented the Dowd place for many years





Old man winter, arrived August 15, 1950 for a brief visit.

before he bought it. He also bought the McCormick place which was one mile east.

At first Alfred grew mostly wheat and oats, then he changed to registered oats and fescue and to this day he grows mostly fescue and raises beef cattle.

Mrs. Burgess passed away in January 1972 after having an operation in the Edmonton University Hospital. She will always be remembered for her cheerfulness, her smile and never complaining even when not feeling well or things seemed to go wrong.

Kathleen took her high school at Halcourt and remembers walking the five miles and either leading Tony, her pony or else leaving him home when she was afraid he might fall on the ice and hurt himself. She took her grade 12 at Beaverlodge high, then took Education at University of Alberta. She has been married to Tom McKeeman of the Buffalo Lake district for 25 years. She is still teaching at the Sexsmith school although she quit for ten years when her children were little. Tom and Kathleen have five children Billy, who is an electrician, is married to Sylvia Toews and they live in Spruce Grove. Joan, a registered nurse is married to Vincenzo Vervena and lives in Calgary. They have two sons, Michael and Shaun. Next comes Karen and Kenneth, the twins. Kenneth is attending the University of Calgary and going in for a lawyer. Karen is clerk-typist at the Treasury Branch in Grande Prairie. Their youngest

son Erin, is in Grade 12 at Sexsmith and plans on being a farmer and welder.

Lawrence and his wife Elizabeth, live in Saskatoon. Lawrence has his doctorate in Entomology. He and his wife have four children all going to school. They are Susan, Jennifer, Peter and Diane.

Marion went to the Agricultural School in Fairview then worked at Singers in Grande Prairie. She married Jim Moon of Bezanson and they now live in Sherwood Park. They have four sons all in school. David, the eldest plays in the Strutters Band. Kenneth and Keith are next and Barry, their youngest, starts school this fall.

Jim and another man have a partnership in two service stations in Edmonton. Marion sells Geni-ware.

Ernest farms the home place with his dad.

In August 1973 Alfred married Mae Lantz and they now live on the home farm during the busy season and at Wetaskiwin when there's little work on the farm.

Over the years Alfred has been able to help many people out when they were unable to get water, by witching a well for them.

Thoughts of water witching remind us that locally we have had several dowzers of note. Some used the traditional forked willow stick, while others used any piece of wire or a handy crow bar. By the "urge" they could not only tell where the aquifers ran but also the depth of the well, or claimed to.

Perhaps Alf Burgess was the peer of the group. Besides building up a staunch following near home he inadvertently came to the rescue of the Calgary Public Works Department. The story was that he noted a water break and a crew digging valiantly to find the leak in the main. Cooly, Alf picked up a wire and started down the street, to stop about a block away from where the crew was working. He went back and told the foreman that he was digging in the wrong place and pointed out the spot where the wire told him the break was. The foreman was much too busy for chit chat but next day he was repairing the break where Alf said it was.

Alf, like all dowzers failed to understand the reason for it all and sought out the Physics Professor of the University of Alberta, who he soon found out did not have an explanation nor any interest in the subject. But Alf was his persistent self and demanded a trial, there in the laboratory. This was granted grudgingly and in a matter of seconds Alf "discovered" water under one corner of the lab at a depth of five feet. Such, of course, was altogether improbable until Alf discovered a water line in the basement of the building.

There are more stories but the other one we like is the time when Ned Sparkes was digging a well and Alf stopped him at the Esso station to inquire progress. Ned reported he was down 30 feet but no water was in sight. At that Alf looked at his watch, studied it for a moment and reported, "You will find water at another six feet." The Sparkes well is 36 feet deep.

## ERNEST BURGESS

I was born in the log hospital on the 'Old Town Hill', the youngest child of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Burgess, and grew up on a farm 11 miles southwest of Beaverlodge where I still live with my family in the same yard as



my dad. I took Grades 1 to 3 at Hayfield School which was 2½ miles from home. I took further schooling at Halcourt and Beaverlodge and then I took two winters at Fairview Agricultural College. I worked in the bush for one winter, in Guelph, Ontario the next winter and in Edmonton the next, and helped my dad on the farm in the summer.

I married Eileen Hoflin of Valhalla in 1963. We bought a trailer and lived in Edmonton that first winter and moved our trailer to the farm in the spring. We lived in the trailer until 1967, at which time we moved into a house we built on the farm.

We have two children — Linda born in 1964 and Gerry born in 1969. We farm three quarters of land with my dad. Our main crops are fescue and oats. We have a few head of cattle to use up some of the straw and fescue hay and to make use of the bush pasture.

### CURT CAMPLAIR

Curt Camplair came to Canada in 1927 from Germany and settled at North Battleford. There he met and married Mary Linkert in 1929. Mary's parents had come from Austria but she was born in Regina. Curt's forefathers had moved from Switzerland to France before going to Germany.

The Camplairs farmed at Renown, Saskatchewan from 1929 to 1932 and at Iffly until 1936. Then they bought the Wertz farm in the Hayfield district. Later they sold it to Adrian Lieverse. In 1955 they moved to Beaverlodge and Curt worked at the Experimental Farm until 1972 when he retired.

It was not easy for Curt to develop the bush farm but the Camplairs made progress each year. Mary found the water situation very taxing as supplies had to be hauled some distance. Ultimately they did get a well but soon afterwards moved to Beaverlodge. There Mary's troubles recurred as water cost 25 cents a pail.

The Camplairs have six children. Mary Ellen is married to Bert Hatton, Harry to Karen von Wolff, Herbert to May McEachern, Jeanette to Bob Mulligan and Doreen, the youngest to Harold Pfau. Jean and Jeanette were twins and Jean died in 1950.

Curt enjoys farming in summer and doing minor repairs and construction which require his particular skills. Mary keeps busy with the grandchildren and as one group moves in for a weekend it takes over from the last visitors so that the cooky jar is seldom full.

### W. H. GILLARD

Gil Gillard was born in Englee, on the east coast of Newfoundland, near the northern tip. His father Henry was of English/French descent and his mother English. As a young man he became interested in the work of Dr. Wilfred Grenfell and went to his mission base at St. Anthony, some 40 miles north of Englee to work. It was quite natural for him to turn to carpentry and his special work there became the framing of boats and barns. It seemed his lot to read blueprints and to convert rough lumber to complement parts. Gil was amongst those who witnessed the memorable scene described in Dr. Grenfell's book "Adrift on an Ice Pan."

From St. Anthony, he moved to Toronto where he worked as a cabinet maker. One occasion he was asked

to make a Circassian walnut mantel designed to encompass the massive fireplace of one of Toronto's new mansions. Not only was this an exciting piece of woodworking but it included a great deal of hand carving. On its completion his employers were delighted and commissioned him to make five additional mantels. Again, the plans of one of these mansions called for a sweeping circular stairs rising from a large foyer, such as is frequently displayed in motion pictures and again Gil was handed the project. He worked diligently and thoughtfully, one piece at a time as required by the plan. Then in the final effort the pieces were put together, as in a jigsaw and fitted as intended. There was no trial and error, no progression of construction. The Master Cabinet Maker just made the pieces fit.

At one time Gil was on the crew constructing a bridge at Parry Sound and there, through the misadventure of a fellow workman he was hurled to a fall of 160 feet to a landing of lumber, gravel and cement. It was a miracle that he survived for he was unconscious for 18 days and spent many months in the hospital.

Gil served in World War I and was a captain in a Cavalry unit on demobilization. When he returned to Toronto he married Edna Rennie, who had lost her husband, Gordon a buddy of Gil's, in the war. She was born Edna Brooks, in Toronto. Her parents, Samuel Tucker Brooks and Fanny Louisa Brooks were of English descent. Edna was one of a family of six girls and was actively associated for a time with St. Andrew's College in Toronto. For a season she was provincial tennis champion. At other times she was employed at Camp Kagawong — a large boys' camp on Balsam Lake near Parry Sound.

There was one child, Grace by the first marriage, now Mrs. Grace Patterson of Vancouver.

The Gillard family consisted of: Esther, married to Cyril Chappelle of Fort St. John; John married to Betty Borg — lives at Edmonton where he is associated with the oil industry; Doris, married to Jack Light of Fort St. John; Marshall, a Greyhound bus driver, married June Fisher and lives at Dawson Creek; Bessie, married Barry Cawston, and lives at Vernon, B.C.; Earle married Marion Coupe and teaches school at Quesnel, B.C. Marshall, Bessie and Earle were born in Beaverlodge.

Gil's next stop was Vancouver to build houses. The pressures of the huge city eventually caught up with him and caused Gil to think of quiet life on a farm. Thus he arrived at Beaverlodge with the family household effects in a Model T Ford Truck. He chose a bush farm west of Beaverlodge and proceeded to clear it by hand, assisted by neighbors Jim Mulligan and Henry Kay. The breaking was done by a horse-drawn plough.

It was a hard fight on the homestead to secure supplies and to secure an education for the growing family but the Gillards held on. About 1942 Gil was prevailed to return to his building and several fine homes in Beaverlodge and the new set of buildings at the Experimental Farm were constructed by him. His buildings were true and solid and as one of his



workmen said, "He would put as much loving care into trimming a piece of poplar lumber as a piece of mahogany." On one occasion Gil casually referred to himself as a manufacturer of wood, rather than as a "wood butcher."

With utmost regrets on the part of all at the Experimental Farm, regulations required his retirement. Shortly afterwards the family moved to Beaverlodge. Gil died in 1965. Edna lived in Grande Prairie for a time and moved to Edmonton.

Gil was known for his forthright views of life and living, as is Edna, and this philosophy has been passed on to his family and to many of his friends. It held them in good stead on the homestead and in their struggle to get a school established in the district. Perhaps Gil did have one major hangup, moose hunting. Whatever happened, he was out west immediately after the first fall of snow and always got his moose. Jim Mulligan recalls that once Gil borrowed Jim's old army 30-30 but could only supply three shells. Gil went out, and returned with two moose. When Gil was getting up in years his hunting gear contained two bottles, one of kerosene against chilblains and Minard's liniment lest he get a chill.

Neighbors of the Gillards still talk of the happy atmosphere in the Gillard home, even in the distressing Depression years. Edna always has had a happy approach to life and this manifests to a considerable extent her love for music. Music pervaded the home at all times and training in this field was freely given to many neighborhood children, some as far away as Beaverlodge. Edna recalls that accompaniments were eagerly sought, and even the strains of Lohengrin were borrowed, in lowly stoneboats, to grace the passage down the bridal path. She is known for her philosophy about bringing up children: Always give them loving care — feed their bodies but don't neglect their minds, and the mother is the best baby-sitter. She believes that a woman always has an inner strength when she needs it. There was no carping criticism. A generous spirit pervaded the home.



The Gillard Family, 1963. Back: John and Marshall, Centre: Esther, Doris, Bessie and Earle. Front: Mr. and Mrs. Gillard.

## THE HAYFIELD SCHOOL

About 1930 there was need for a school in the Hayfield district. The Gillard family had arrived and were being sent over to the Gimle school. Two Gillards and four Martin children rode in a cutter made by Gil Gillard. Also there was the Mulligan family and others of the neighborhood. Regulations permitted the formation of a school district if there were 10 pupils but to some this indicated more taxes. Also there was the decision of location and some of the other minor perplexities which can assume major proportions in a small district. The first major decision was to build with log and each ratepayer was charged with supplying three logs. The lumber was obtained from Lee Borden's berth at Skunk Lake.

The next decision was location. This was solved by Jim Mulligan and Gil Gillard contributing \$2.00 each, a matter of major concern to each of them at that time, to rent an unused house and three acres from Carl Britton for \$3.00 for the term. Miss Jean Montgomery of Edmonton was hired as teacher, at \$80 per month and Jim Mulligan the janitor at \$6.00 per month. Jim was the first chairman, Gil Gillard the secretary, and Mrs. Art Stringer was on the Board. School commenced in the fall of 1933, with pupils Abe, Sarah, Agatha and Jake Lowen, Bill and Bob Mulligan, Kathleen Burgess, Weldon, Tom and Clifford Stringer, Esther, John and Doris Gillard and Elwin Britton. Abe Lowen built the first desks, all dovetailed and when they were discarded five years later, there were cries of despair.

Construction of the school house started forthwith, on a site selected on the Jim Howe farm. The name was settled at a meeting in the school when someone pointed to a 40-acre field of hay viewed from the site. With the new school, Mrs. Ruth Conley was engaged as teacher in 1934. Mrs. Conley taught the school for eight terms and at times there were 42 pupils, all grades. Classes continued at Hayfield school until consolidation in 1949. Miss Dorothy Reaume of Hythe, now Mrs. Ross Sudnik was the last teacher and Alfred Burgess the last secretary.

Gone are memories of most of the arguments. Memories of concerts, picnics and meetings in the school and throughout the Hayfield district are still vivid in the minds of the original settlers. School consolidation has been accepted as a means of providing a higher standard of education, but in Hayfield it has been costly to the community spirit.

## CHARLIE MORDEN

Charlie Clifford Morden was born at Hartney, Manitoba in 1895. His father was John D. Morden of St. Marys, near London, Ontario and he came to Winnipeg in 1880. His mother was a Calder and other relatives were McLeans, McDermids and Gilchris, all Highland Scotch. Some spoke Gaelic, "especially Auntie Gilchrist". Charlie's mother was a Collingwood, a direct descendant of Admiral Collingwood who took over at Trafalgar after Lord Nelson was shot down. Charlie has researched this in the Maritime Museum, Vancouver.

Charlie farmed in Manitoba until 1939 then worked out until 1944. During World War II he spent eight



months in Labrador and a year and a half in the Yukon. He came to Beaverlodge in 1944, bought the Hart place west of town in 1946 and Mrs. Pitts' farm at Hualien in 1960.

He had one brother, Ewart Ross Morden who homesteaded in Goodfare and died in 1929 when overcome by gas in the William Martin well he was digging. Charlie says that he and Ewart were Liberals. Ewart was named after Ewart Gladstone and he was named after Clifford Sifton.

There are two sisters, both teachers. Lena married Everitt Short of Wembley and Taylor Flats and is now retired in Dawson Creek. Vera married Bill Loucks, who came to Baldonnel in 1930 from Willow Bunch, Saskatchewan near the United States border. They are now retired living in Summerland.

Life hasn't been easy for Charlie. His father sought to be a lay preacher; as a farmer he wanted good horses and good buildings. Perhaps his love for horses came naturally. Tradition has it that his grandfather was a horseman in Lincolnshire, England; also that he would steal handfuls of wheat from his employer to keep his horses slick. As to Charlie's farming, he says "I don't own the farm, the farm owns me".

Charlie's friends and neighbors know him as a warm, outgoing chap whose thoughtfulness gives pleasure to others. A group of Beaverlodge girls, the Tartanettes, dancing at Antigonish and in Montreal in Centennial Year were delighted to find that Charlie could take time to travel to cheer them on. Always he has been interested in people.

#### THE JIM MULLIGAN STORY

Jim and Annie Mulligan and son Bill came from Manitoba to Saskatchewan in 1927. That fall they came north and homesteaded in the Hayfield district. Then they returned to Manitoba and brought back a car load of farm goods. Returning with them were the McLaughlin family and the Henry Kays, Mrs. Kay being Annie's sister. The Kays lived in the old town of Beaverlodge for a while and then moved to the new town.

Jim Mulligan and Henry Kay took brushing contracts. In 1930 they settled on their homesteads until Mulligans sold out in 1971 and moved to Beaverlodge. They raised three boys: Bill, Robert and Roy.

The first project they tackled in the early days was to get a school. Apparently it was quite a battle for it took three years to get the go ahead. It was a log schoolhouse. The lumber needed was sawn at Lee Borden's mill and all the work was volunteer. It was built on the John McLaughlin farm and at first 15 children came to receive their education. It increased to 42 in 1947.

The Mulligan's home was the scene of many a Friday night of fun, as sleigh loads of people came and enjoyed an old fashioned "Hoe-Down" and "swing-your-partner" dance. We would start dancing about 10 o'clock and "doe-cee-doe" until 6 a.m. Jim had and still has, a loud, clear voice and the squares he would call were endless. He also played the mouth organ; other local people brought violins and lunch break saw anyone who could, pitch in and sing or dance for entertainment. Those good old days will not be forgotten.

Jim and Annie reside in Beaverlodge now and are still the same cheerful, smiling couple. Two of their boys are married: Robert to Jeanette Camplair and Roy to Pat McEachern. All of their boys farm in the Hayfield district.

#### OTTO NELSON

Otto Nelson came to Canada in 1923. He worked in the bush camps in the British Columbia interior for a while, then came to the Peace country in search of land. He was a kind, happy man liked by all.

He wanted to live near Albin Ringstrom so he bought homestead land S.W. 15-71-11. He loved the small Ringstrom girls and would play with them often. When Connie and Albin needed a baby-sitter he was eager to oblige.

The Ringstroms were good to him, taking him along to town and to all the social entertainments. The last time they did so, they were on the way to a bingo game, Otto became very ill. He was still alive when they arrived at the Beaverlodge hospital but he died soon after being admitted. When the Will was read, the Ringstroms discovered that their two small girls were the beneficiaries. He had willed his two quarters to Elvie and Vivian.

God bless the memory of this good friend and neighbour.

#### THE ALBIN RINGSTROM STORY

Albin Ringstrom was born in Linsell, Sweden. He grew to manhood in that beautiful country, attending school and serving his compulsory three years in the Army. He began working in the woods as did so many young men but the lure of the unknown and his adventurous spirit proved to be an unbeatable combination. In 1924 he decided to see the world, said "Farvel" to his loved ones and to Sweden and was off to Canada. He embarked on the ship "Gripsholm" and after many interesting days on board ship landed in Canada. He went by train to Kamloops where he found work in the woods, cutting ties for the Canadian Railroad Company. For this back-breaking work he received the munificent sum of 14 cents per tie! He cut as many as 40 ties per day, thus earning \$5.60. He had to pay \$1.00 a day for room and board. He managed to save a goodly sum from the \$4.60 he had left, so being anxious to see his brother Ole who farmed in the Beaverlodge district he bought a ticket and was on his way.

The steel ended at Wembley. He met a fellow Swede there who proved to be friendly and helpful. Adolph Dahlstrom immediately asked Albin "Have you any money to spend."

"Oh yes," said Albin, "I have plenty."

"Well then," said Adolph, "there is a quarter of land near me that is for sale to homesteaders. Why don't you buy it?" Albin was homesick for his nice home in Sweden and tired of being homeless and footloose. He agreed to look at it. Adolph offered to give him a ride to brother Ole's farm and on the way they could look at the land, too.

"Off we went," said Albin, with a laugh. "We angled across the quarter. I looked for the house that Adolph said was hidden in a poplar bluff but couldn't see it at all. Finally Adolph pointed to a tiny log shack



with a sod roof and said "There it is." What a shock! Albin was used to plumbing and here was his house made of logs and with a sod roof! He couldn't live in that so he moved in with his brother and lived with him for two years. He bought that quarter of land, S.W. 13-71-11 and worked very hard breaking and working the land until it was suitable for crops. Later on he bought the quarter belonging to Jack Bendosky. He worked in the woods for the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company for a few winters, cutting ties in order to earn money for needed machinery. In 1929 he moved onto his land, built a log house that he lived in for two years and later used as a granary.

His nearest neighbor was Otto Nelson, a man who proved to be a wonderful neighbor. He and Albin purchased two teams of horses, a plough and a seed drill and farmed together. Their crops of wheat were just beautiful and would bring in bumper crops, they thought hopefully. What big plans they had too for spending the money. Albin was going to buy machinery and farm alone and then he would hire that big Norske from Valhalla, Leonard Nepstad to drill him a well. He would build a nice, big house and maybe get married! Otto came by, knocked and walked in saying, "Well, we sure had it last night."

"It isn't anything to laugh at", said Albin reprovingly, "if you are 100 per cent haled out. Now we can't buy more machinery and I can't build my new house." "Oh well," said Otto, "if you want to cry I'll cry with you." Albin went to the bush again that winter, making ties, but it was for the last time.

Albin built his house two years later. It was big, 20 x 30, with an added kitchen, size 14 x 14. It was built of logs, the popular material those days and Albin completed the kitchen for use. The rest of the house he left unfinished, not even putting on a roof. He just could not afford to for the depression was beginning. He lived in the kitchen part for one year.

Albin was the owner of seven horses during the years he farmed. Dick and Dolly, Prince and Pride were raised by him. Buster and Ruby were purchased. These horses were of Belgian stock and were Albin's pride and joy.

In 1933 one of Albin's dreams came true, for then he could afford to hire Leonard Nepstad to drill a well for him. He went to Leonard's home one Sunday, saying "I want a well." "O.K.", said Len, "If you will meet me in Beaverlodge with a four-up and haul the drilling outfit to your place I'll drill the well." On Monday Albin hauled the outfit to his farm and Leonard began drilling at once. Late evening came, Leonard was still drilling and Albin was getting tired, so he said, "When are you thinking of quitting for the night?" "When I get the water" replied Len, "I never quit until I do." At midnight Albin went in to make lunch and to fortify them all with some of his powerful Swedish brew when all at once he heard a yell, and on running outside was told that he had water, good, clear water at 130 feet.

While Albin was busily at work on his farm, FATE was as busily at work for him that year of 1929 two girls came to visit their uncle, Emil Swanson. They were Connie and Elvie Anderson from Sweden. Now Albin and Emil were neighbours so it was to be ex-

pected that Albin would visit there once in a while. Soon they were telling him their story.

"We lived in Smaaland, Sweden with our parents. Sister and I wanted to see the world so we were allowed to come to Canada to visit uncle Emil. We came on the ship "Kongsholm" and landed in Halifax. How hard it was to travel! No one understood us and we couldn't speak English. It took one week to get to Halifax and another week to get to Beaverlodge. The only sentence we could say in English was "Corn Flakes" because we had that in Sweden too. So we ate so much of that that I hate the sight of it even yet! We could buy paper bags that were filled with bread, butter, crackers and cheese, so this helped. In Winnipeg we went to the Y.W.C.A. and got a room. They made us iron the linens for they did not understand that we had money to pay for everything. They were so unfriendly! We had been warned before leaving home to never talk to strangers or take candy from strangers so when two young men from Sweden came over to us and tried to be friendly and helpful we became frightened. The boys had a Swedish-English dictionary, so we finally overcame our fears and it helped us a lot. We needed more butter (this was on the train) and they tried hard to get it for us, but I do not think they pronounced it right for we never did get it. When the boys offered to carry our suitcases, I told Elvie "to hand on to them."

Connie and Elvie stayed with uncle Emil seven years. They were very lonely and found the homestead life hard and disappointing. They were accustomed to a modern home in Sweden, with good schools and a different way of life in general. They finally went back to Sweden in 1936.

The sister Elvie married and settled down in Sweden but Connie was restless — maybe she remembered the handsome young neighbour named Albin. In 1938 she decided to return. She and Albin met on the boat for Albin had been over to visit his people in 1937 and was now returning too. He began visiting Emil Swanson quite regularly and soon he settled down to the business of seriously courting this girl. He wanted her to be his wife and no one else was going to get her!

Albin owned a Model A Ford and off they would go to the local dances. He was tired of going out to check the car to be sure it did not freeze on the cold winter nights, for this was before the days of anti-freeze, so he hit upon a daring plan. When Connie went into the hall he stayed outside for a while, then came in looking very pleased with himself. After the dance he showed Connie what he had done. He had brought a tub along and had drained off the water and placed the full tub in the car. He filled the radiator with the liquid and they took off. Before long there was a smell of overheating, and upon investigation, found that poor Albin had neglected to replace the plug! All the liquid had run out!

Albin and Connie were married in 1940 in the Anglican manse in Grande Prairie. The two friends who knew about the wedding were Tom and Lucy Williams and the friends who witnessed the wedding were Violet Anderson, bridesmaid and Kenneth Ander-

son, best man. The reception was in the home of Martin Anderson, Ken's father and mother. Mrs. Andy Lasing, a neighbour put on a shower for Connie and taught her how to bake cakes the Canadian way. They received so many lovely gifts but the one Connie and Albin remember the best is the one they received from Otto Nelson — a small pig!

Connie recalls the day she and her sister Elvie came to Wembley. Uncle Emil promised to meet them, but they did not know Emil from Adam. How would they recognize him? Well, they found him or rather the trainman, Ernest Erickson found him for them and there he was with his big, big mustache and all! He owned a green Chev. Every time they passed land with a small house on it, Emil would say, "Here is our home." It wasn't much of a house but was so welcome to the two tired, lonely girls.

In 1946, the Ringstroms sold out and went back to Sweden. An auction sale with Miller Patterson as auctioneer saw everything sold, even the land that Albin had worked so hard on to make it a paying farm. He sold the land with a protective clause attached — if he came back before the year was up he could buy the land back. They stayed in Sweden one year less a day. Albin worked for his brother-in-law who was a plumber but found the work confining after living in Canada. When they came back to uncle Emil, he agreed to sell the land back to the Ringstroms.

Two girls have been born to Albin and Connie. Elvie

began school in Sweden. The girls were baptised and confirmed in the little Anglican church in Halcourt and the Ringstroms were faithful adherents of that church as long as they lived on the farm

In 1973 Connie and Albin decided to sell the farm to Reed Weiss. They moved into Beaverlodge in August, 1973, into a comfortable three-bedroom house. They wanted to live among the many wonderful friends of the surrounding districts.

Elvie graduated from the University of Alberta, choosing teaching as her profession. She married Donald Morse, a civil engineer. They live in Edmonton with their two children, Brian 10 and Nancy who is 6. Elvie and her two children love to play the piano.

Vivian is married to Myron Spak, a salesman for R. Angus Alberta Limited. They have two children, Mark 3, and Leanna who is 8 months old. In the Ringstrom home are several lovely articles that Vivian has made.

#### THOMAS SUTTON

Thomas Sutton came to the country from near Paris, Ontario where he had worked on a farm. He helped Charles McNaught for a while until he filed on a homestead in the Hayfield district and then farmed on his own.

As a break in loneliness of homestead life, Tom worked part time for Bill Liberty. Finally his health failed and he went into hospital in Edmonton and eventually died there.







The town of Beaverlodge is a thriving trading centre.



# HAZELMERE

The district lying south and west of Elmworth was settled mainly about 1928 by newcomers to the Peace who found land there which pleased them and by neighbors from adjoining districts such as Rio Grande who took up second homesteads. The district became divided into settlements such as Hazelmere and Sylvester with their schools Beaverbrook, Sylvester and Itipaw. The tree growth in the Sylvester district was particularly heavy and the soil was hard to work. There were schools and the usual round of community activities. In addition, Riley Elliott operated a saw-mill at Itipaw for a few years.

The Hazelmere community prospered and in effect spread out westward towards the approach to the Stony Lake and the Monkman Pass. The Sylvester and Itipaw districts were less fortunate as many of the original settlers did not remain and their land is now principally held as an adjunct to established farmers nearby.

## R. G. BELVEDERE

Rocton George Belvedere was one of the first settlers in the Sylvester district. He came from Utah and the western States to Penticton and to the Peace in 1925. In his possession were some very nice pieces of antique furniture made of seven kinds of wood — apple, cherry, plum, etc.

It was most interesting to sit and listen to his tales of the old days on the western frontier, of sharp scraps with Indians who at the time ruled the West. His father was killed by Indians and he was raised by his grandparents. He could remember sitting on his grandfather's shoulder to see President Lincoln. He could tell of shooting buffalo of which the prairies were full in those days.



R. G. Belvedere and his team, 1940.

He was a kindly gentleman and a good neighbor but was inclined to be eccentric. At one time he travelled by stoneboat but when this was worn out he used his disc. When Howard Russill and Frank Brewer had their car stuck in a mudhole he refused to give them a pull, indicating his disdain for some of the "new contraptions".

He trapped in season and made pals of his horses. When he died in 1942 he was preparing to give them their evening feed of oats.

It seems that Belvedere was of French descent. At least a few years ago a nephew from Quebec who could not speak English arrived to view the old man's farm.

## WALTER BRUSH

Walter Brush was born at Amherstburg, Ontario and was married to Felecia Grondin of Windsor, Ontario. Walter was in the concrete business when he came west to Willowbush, Saskatchewan in 1916. Blinn was still a baby when Walter heard of land and opportunities in the Peace River country from his brother-in-law, Edward Grondin who had been there previously.

In the fall of 1918 Walter came to Grande Prairie and got a job with a Mr. Bowen, a brother-in-law of George Young. He did general farm work, building barns and fences and feeding cattle. His wife joined him in the spring of 1919. They lived in a house across the tracks and east of the feed mill. Here daughter, Furth was born.

In 1920 Walter filed on NW 36-69-11 in the Elmworth district and they moved there, proving up their land with cattle. Walter earned extra cash by working out, carpenter work, "everything in general". Times were tough and tales were told of Walter carrying 50 pounds of flour on his back along with other groceries six miles to his homestead.

In the following years, Murray, Edith and Phyllis were born. When Blinn was old enough to go to school he rode "Ol' Buck". As time went on "Ol' Buck" couldn't carry all the children so Walter bought SE 2-70-12 in what later became the Hazelmere district, and the Beaverbrook school district. The Brush children had then only three miles to go to school.

From 1927 to 1930 quite a few settlers came in. There was always a helping hand when needed and no one was sent away hungry. Everyone shared whatever they had. In the thirties during the depression there was no money for entertainment but there were house parties and picnics and free lunch provided by the families. When the Itipaw school was opened, dances were held there. A cover charge of 25 cents per family provided the lunch and coffee. Music was provided free by local talent. One man had a tame moose calf and brought it to the dances. At lunch time people



would feed it lunch and cake. Folks came for miles to see it.

Walter stayed on the farm until he passed away in 1958. Mrs. Brush passed away in 1960. Murray stayed on the farm and was married to a widow, Agnes McCullough in 1967. He sold the farm in 1972 and moved to Grande Prairie where he passed away in 1973. Blinn, Edith and Phyllis are also in Grande Prairie and Furth is in Claresholm. Blinn married Etta Bickner and had one child, Viola. Edith married Ignatius Gaunt, who died as a result of an accident. Phyllis married Glen Smoke. There were four children, Tom, Donnie, Doreen and Carrie Lou. Doreen is married to Bruce Dunbar and they have one child. Furth married Eldon Sedore and has two children, Bonnie and Wayne.



The Brush family.

### ALEXANDER DALGLEISH

Every young man was heading west; it was the land of the future. So, with the promise of opportunity added to a dash of adventure, Alexander Dalglish started the trek westward. Unfortunately, he didn't have the choicest form of transportation. No luxury liner or Greyhound bus saw him reach the Portage Plains in Manitoba. This migration from the Ottawa Valley was of his own free will and with calloused feet. He and a companion walked the total distance. What a physical fitness program!

Alexander settled around Regina, North West Territories. A section of land and a new bride combined to bring him prosperity and happiness. Alice Geddes, his sprightly wife, was a frontier woman in the truest sense of the word. Growing up with the dis-

turbing situations surrounding the Riel Rebellion, she was accustomed to Indian bands slipping along the creek of her father's farm. Undaunted in pioneer spirit, she agreed to share with Alex the trial and tribulations of being a farmer's wife. Life on the prairies proved to be more of a trial though. Between the gopher holes and the damaging drought, "homesteading" became a bleak financial situation.

Even pioneers couldn't live on romantic notions and dreamy illusions! Hard core reality meant selling the homestead and moving to Rouleau. Alex went into a joint business venture operating a livery stable and implement agency. This was more in tune with his nature as he was a great admirer of good horseflesh. He bought, sold and bartered; he became a "wheeler dealer" if it meant possession of a high stepping Standardbred. His pride in a sleek, showy trotting team was comparable to an aristocrat's pride in a Rolls Royce. Indeed for years he was known to own some of the best horseflesh in that region of Saskatchewan, winning numerous prizes and ribbons at fairs.

In 1907, the Dalglishs, with their five scampering youngsters, boarded the C.P.R. to head for Kelowna, B.C. With little else but memories, Alex left Saskatchewan behind to head into British Columbia sunshine. No more prairie dust, parchy sunshine or gopher potholes — the Okanagan Valley was the promised land.

He started an orchard near Rutland. This provided the four maverick boys with work and recreation. The story is told that Alex had a hard time keeping the boys' minds on their labours. Instead of picking tomatoes, Bert and Allan were caught in the notorious act of throwing them at the virtuous parson. Or another hair-raising prank was the boys hitching the two Jersey steers to their dad's new buckboard. Needless to say, that buckboard was smashed to smithereens!

The British Columbia sunshine didn't initiate permanent bonds though and in 1927 the family was once more uprooted to settle in the Peace River area. Alex scouted the land and filed by proxy on homesteads for his four sons. He bought a half-section of land near Hazelmere, the Lefevre place. Optimism was the key sentiment as all the Dalglishs were enthused about their fresh start. Alex was very impressed with the green, heavily wooded country. He boasted "There is plenty of wood and good water — what more could a man ask."

The previous year, 1926 Allan and Carson had moved up with two boxcar loads of settlers' effects. One of the most cherished possessions was a satin-smooth porcelain bath tub.

All of the boys, Bert, Allan, Carson and Ken were keen sportsmen. Ken pitched for several ball teams in Grande Prairie and if you couldn't find Ken at a ball game you probably could locate him at a fishing hole. Allan was the catcher and could really slug a ball as well. Many opposing players would have to chase one of his home run hits. Hunting was also a popular sport. Both "town and country" met at the Dalglish residence for some racey moose hunts in the fall.

With all this activity, it is a wonder that the boys harbored any romantic notions or intentions.





The Bert Dalglish family.



Bert Dalglish and his chariot racing team.

However, Carson found time to go courting, marrying a young school marm, Rita Cleland. Alan followed in his brother's tradition marrying Dorcas Macklin in 1935. Apparently, school teachers appealed to both boys' tastes! Moreover, Rita and Dorcas must have taught their lessons well.

Arguing about a team of horses is not the customary way of beginning a romance. Bert had a speedy pair of horses, Red and Blue. The story is told that Jean Leckie liked the team so she had to like Bert too. The only way to get the horses was to take him along in the deal. They agreed to settle their horsey arguments and in 1936 exchanged saddles for marital bonds.

Ken was not a farmer by nature. He was lured to California where he married Mildred Davis, sister of Gene Davis. He frequently came back to the area especially if there was a big game hunt in store.

The two Dalglish girls, Beth and Verna enjoyed careers in the Peace River country as well. A trained nurse, Beth was locally employed at the Grande Prairie hospital. Unlike the movie stereotype version

of nurse marrying doctor, Beth married a travelling salesman from Ashdown Hardware, Jack Kerr.

Verna had already married in the Okanagan. Besides being an accomplished wife to Ralph Campbell, Verna was a perfectionist of music. She gave piano lessons to many in the Beaverlodge area. Ralph was foreman at the Experimental Farm for many years.

If one was to recap notable hallmarks in the Dalglish history, it would mean moments of triumph, despair, heartache and happiness.

Bert acquired quite a reputation as a guide and outfitter. For years he guided both big game hunters and oil exploration companies to successful adventures. There were 186 Dalglish horses under the saddle at one time. The pack horses were kept a half mile down from the Hazelmere store in his pasture and a combination of wild mustangs and wild kids always created havoc and pandemonium.

Allan and Dorcas farmed on the original Dalglish property. Dorcas taught at the local schools, Odin, Beaverlodge, Itipaw and Elmworth. Rain or shine, Dorcas managed to keep the school "perking" even if it meant jumping on "Dinah" her trusty saddlehorse to open the school!

Sad moments as in anyone's life are moments of destiny and death. One week before Christmas in 1937, Verna passed away of pleurisy pneumonia. In 1944, with the passing of harvest, Alexander died. His wife Alice, lived until she was 94, her active hands still knitting mittens for her numerous grandchildren. Perhaps the most tragic event because of it's unexpectancy, was the passing of Ken in 1973.

All the Dalglish's produced future generations. Verna had one daughter Mary, who now resides in Edmonton. Beth had two daughters, Margaret and Dorothy. Bert had three children, Douglas, Joyce and



Janice. They all reside in the Beaverlodge area keeping in close contact with the farm. Allen had two daughters, Patsy and Helen. Both the girls are married — Helen married Jim Brown and Patsy married Jack Dobb. Carson's son, Billy carried the Dagleish surname the farthest having four children, three of them being boys. Ken had two children — Letta Jean and Ken Jr.

Thus, the possibility of the Dagleish name and heritage dying is a remote possibility. However, it is now the sons, daughters and grandchildren who occupy the forefront. Life has been turned over to them and there is always new sod and land to be broken.

### THE JACOB DEREWENKO STORY

The Derewenkos, a large Polish family heard about the wonderful Peace River country in Poland. Harry Halko had settled in Alberta, around the Rio Grande region. He wrote to Jacob Derewenko describing the land as an opportunity to make a good living.

Thus, full of expectation and a tremendous amount of ambition Jacob Derewenko and his family emigrated from Poland. They crossed the ocean in 1928 and went to Andrew, Alberta. The following year the family moved up to the Hazelmere district. Jacob, with endless determination started homesteading from scratch. The homestead was raw bush, not even a road was evident. He had to clear a trail from Senenkos and one of the earliest memories of the children was the warning: "Watch for the slices or notches marked in the trees. If you don't you'll go off the trail and be lost."

Out of green poplar and burned, scorched land, Jacob provided for his family. It was a simple, self-sufficient existence with everyone working together pulling their own share. Jacob with the patience and solidarity of a mountain constructed a flour mill out of granite rock. The girls ground their own flour, picked blueberries in the summer and by milking a cow — they got by. It wasn't an ideal condition with "the Depression" but not once did Jacob or Barbara Derewenko complain or regret leaving Poland. No, they had made their decision and even if the rocky soil produced a poor garden, this was home. This was their new life!

It is never easy to settle in a new land and leave one's friends, culture and language behind. The children were in a strange, foreign world and not knowing the language made it extremely difficult.

As young girls, Rosie and Mary planned to run away. They would walk back to Andrew where at least they had Ukrainian friends. However, by the time they had travelled to Liberty's Hill, the sun was setting and it was time to return home. It was a short adventure for the runaways!

The Derewenko clan was composed of ten youngsters — Harry, Rose, Mary, Jessie, Mike, Louise, Olga, Joe, Annie and John.

The older girls, Mary and Jessie, worked out and thus learned English. The worst was over when you could understand the language — friends were easily made. This new country was no longer so frightening.

The younger children Jessie, Mike, Louise, and Olga obtained their education in a difficult manner.

Going to school meant trudging six miles to Beaverbrook and they never missed a necessary day. Cold weather, stormy blizzards or dark mornings didn't detain them; the children carried a lantern to see the way.

The Derewenko boys were not afraid of honest work either. Henry was employed by several farmers and Mike wrangled on hunting parties for Wapiti Brown.

Excitement did come; life wasn't all toil and hardship. A big holiday was July 1 — everyone was keen to go to the Rio Grande Sports! It was all new and very thrilling — the Derewenkos hadn't seen bucking broncos or a rodeo in their previous homeland.

Other memorable times were the local country dances. They and their surrounding neighbours would battle snow drifts if it meant stepping out to a West End school dance. Even if times were tough there was always something to look forward to.

Tragedy struck in 1935 when Jacob was accidentally killed. His wife stayed on the homestead until 1942. She then moved to British Columbia to live with Mike. Most of the family left the area, the girls to marry and start new homes elsewhere. Mary is the only Derewenko to make her permanent roots in the Hazelmere district. She married Pete Silvaniuk in 1937 to become a farmer's wife and a hard working partner. Today, the Silvaniuks still reside close to Hazelmere. They're renowned for their neighbourliness and good coffee!

Such is the Jacob Derewenko story. The Derewenkos were typical of the country they settled on — strong, honest and formidable. They were the type of people who provided the foundation for Canada.

### RILEY ELLIOTT

Mr. and Mrs. Riley Elliott lived for a while at a farm south of Beaverlodge. They had two children, twins Alvie and Elva. Elva married Nick Lingrell and they lived at Rio Grande and then moved on the Wapiti south of Itipaw. They had a piece of land by the river where they always had a nice garden and the place was known as Lingrell's Flat. Elva and Nick made their living by trapping across the Wapiti.

Alvie married Hazel Beard and they had two children, Delbert and Faye. Delbert lived most of the time with his grandparents. Delbert enlisted in World War II and was wounded in the Dieppe raid and died overseas. Faye is married and lives in Vancouver. Hazel worked at the Experimental Farm for several years and now lives in Sexsmith.

Mr. and Mrs. Riley Elliott lived for a while in the Hinton Trail district where they had a large strawberry patch. About 1934 they bought Art Bentley's quarter of land and built a store across from the Itipaw school and had a post office. The school was called Itipaw but the post office was called Sylvester. Their grandson, Delbert lived with them there and helped with the store and hauled the freight until he enlisted. In early 1940, they sold the store and along with Elva and Nick Lingrell moved to B.C. where Nick and Elva had a big fishing boat. When Mr. Elliott died, Mrs. Elliott moved in with her daughter Elva, who later died very suddenly leaving Mrs. Elliott alone. She has now passed on too.





Alvie Elliott's dog team.

### THE AUSTIN GAUNT FAMILY — by Tilly Gaunt

Austin was born in Kenora, Ontario and later moved to the Peace River country with his parents.

I, Tilly was born in Daysland, Alberta. We met in Edmonton during wartime where Austin was serving in the army and were married in 1943. We had four children, Deanne, Dale, Marilyn and Bryan.

Deanne and Dale were born in Edmonton where we lived before venturing to northern Alberta in the spring of 1947. This was a great experience for me.

We flew to Grande Prairie and stayed the night in the Donald Hotel. In the morning a friend of Austin's, Howard Russell met us with a small truck to go to Beaverlodge. There again Austin's brother Pete met us with a team of horses and a Bennett Buggy. From there we drove to Halcourt, which seemed to take hours. As it was spring breakup the rest of the journey was by horse and sleigh.

When we left Edmonton it was warm so we were wearing summer clothing and no overshoes. We nearly froze to death. I was quite sure we would never get to granddad Gaunt's homestead at Sylvester! But finally we arrived — cold and hungry. Two of the brothers had a hot meal prepared for us.

My homestead experiences were just beginning! At this time there were log houses, which I had never seen in my life, no power and only outdoor plumbing! It made me shudder as I was used to electricity and now I had to get a match to get the lamps going.

At bed time it would be nice and warm but soon the wood would burn down and you got up to rebuild the fire. Then it would be morning again. And this continued as the homesteaders' way of life. I soon met a neighbour lady, Margaret Connelly so it was not quite so lonely.

We stayed at granddads for a couple of months before buying a farm from Ralph Koebel in the Hazelmere district. We lived on a little hill at the four crossroads. Koebel's lived there too until the fall when they moved to Vancouver, B.C. They had a small house in the yard, also a car and were very kind to us. As we had no car, it was horses or walk.

We started to farm but again we had no power, no phone, wood stoves and outdoor plumbing. I really thought I was at the end of the world.

The store and post office run by Herb Jordan was

just a mile away. Mail delivery was twice a week. There was a telephone in the store so when you had a long-distance message you had to go to the store.

The Beaverbrook school was just across the road from us at the time and the children had to come over to get water from our farm. On cold winter mornings my living room would be full of children who were warming up after a walk of a couple miles.

There was always someone dropping in. After a rain or snow people would be stuck so Austin would have to get the tractor and pull them out. We finally named our place "Do-Drop-In".

In 1951 we finally got a telephone, which was a big break. I bought a raffle ticket for \$1.00 at the County Fair in Grande Prairie and won a brand new 1955 Dodge. At this time we had an old Merc so we sold it. Soon the roads also were improved.

School was centralized at Elmnorth and our school was closed down. The bus stop was at our corner so once again we had the kids in time of trouble. I'll never forget the one night when the bridge approach at Mrs. Frame's was washed out and the bus was stuck. Austin went to meet it with the tractor and wagon and brought about 20 kids home with him. An announcement was made on the radio and some children were picked up, but some spent the night with us. Those were the good old days.

Then the oil well and saw-mill came in on the Monkman Pass. There was no end of trucks — day and night. A good many times when it was too stormy we had truck drivers spending the night when they were stranded. Right to this day some of the truck drivers meet the boys and talk about the storms and the nights spent at our house.

One winter there was a terrible storm that blew the road in south of our place to the post office. The mail had to go, so Dale got his old horse Buck and the mail went by pony express.

We had many meetings at our house such as Farmers' Union, C.W.L., W.I., 4-H Sewing Club, 4-H Beef Club, telephone meetings and bingo and whist parties. We were one of the first families to have a television set. It was the thing for neighbours to come and watch T.V. It was just like a movie house — especially on Sunday night for Bonanza.

We did all right on the farm with our hobbies and friends. However there were times when the bears, wolves and coyotes wouldn't leave us alone.

In the fall of 1958, Austin passed away suddenly. I was left alone with four children to raise. We stayed on the farm, although the land was rented. We kept some cattle, chickens, ducks, turkeys and geese. We enjoyed this very much too.

Then the time came for the children to go to high school. Deanne and Dale went to Edmonton. In 1964 when it was time for Marilyn and Bryan to go to high school we left the farm and bought a house in Grande Prairie. At present, all the children are married and living in Grande Prairie.

### WILL AND ANNIE HOLMES

Will Holmes came from England with his mother and three sisters, Mary, Tamar and Dolly to Regina in 1925. The father had died in England. He and his



mother stayed with his uncle Jack and he first worked for Homer Glen, then in Saskatchewan. His uncle then found a job for him with a neighbour. This man had just hauled 12 loads of poplar poles and after some months of buck sawing all this firewood and doing chores Will was told he could go home. He thought it seemed a lot of work to do for his board but this was Canada and he was from England. Uncle Jack was incensed at such poor treatment and took Will right back and made the farmer pay him \$30.00 for his work.

After that he found summer work with another neighbour at \$90.00 a month and he was able to have his mother stay with him.

In 1928 Will and his mother drove a model T Ford as far as Wembley. Not knowing the country, he hired a Mr. Johnstone to drive them to Elmworth. Afterwards they walked all over the country looking for a suitable homestead.

Hospitality to a newcomer is so vividly remembered! Will recalls Mrs. Ducharme seeing them walking by and asked them in for tea, only to find that they had both come from the same part of Saskatchewan. The Will Walkers were others who opened their doors to the newcomers. The Holmes walked clear to the Wapiti looking for land which would not be too far from school for the three girls. Mrs. Holmes also filed on a homestead and as there was no access road, Will and his mother had to cut a trail through the bush.

Will dug a cellar as a first step in house building. Then he and his mother went to Hinton Trail on foot to get boards to finish the roof. Rather than ask for help he carried the boards on his back and his mother walked behind to help balance them. Pole sheds were built as temporary quarters for the livestock. When these buildings were constructed they went back to Regina to get his three sisters.

The following year Will borrowed a team from Frank Smith in order to get groceries from Rio Grande as the trails were too rough for the Model T. He worked a week for the use of the team and Frank told him to borrow the team anytime, meaning on those terms.

For lack of money he obtained sleighs, wagon and plough by doing work for his neighbours. At first he used a wooden beam breaking plough and only two horses, necessitating chopping nearly every root he encountered, so he soon acquired more horsepower.

He assembled a set of spruce and poplar logs for a proper house. Not being knowledgeable as to their suitability he consulted a neighbor who declared them unsuitable, so Will got out a better set. Then the neighbor deemed the first set too good for use as firewood and wanted them for himself. His mother and a neighbour, Ted Argyle helped in the building.

Mrs. Holmes was an accomplished midwife, in demand in those days when homesteaders were so far from doctor and hospitals. She was a great help to her neighbours at threshing time too and was always ready to help whenever needed.

A six rail fence was built around Will's quarter section to contain his 150 sheep. At one time the police were called to witness the devastation caused by Will's sheep in a neighbour's crop, whereupon the police

found this complainant's cattle enjoying Will's oat sheaves.

Will became official poundkeeper, a post he still retains.

He tells of working a week at a project of clearing the road allowance presumably to pay off taxes but he found out later that the work was actually only for people on relief and he had worked for nothing.

Will's early training in engineering in England stood him in good stead once the primary work of setting up a home was established. He was very skillful at repairing and running old separators and machines.

In 1942 he enlisted in the Royal Engineers. While waiting to be called a Government official came forth with a group of "engineers-in-training" and ordered Will to go with them forthwith. He was to instruct the trainees for three months in constructing high towers in the bush. His services were so valuable he was told he was needed as an instructor at home.

He has spent part of his time as millwright in local sawmills and as foreman of the first road construction for the oil company exploration in 1947.

Mrs. Holmes died in 1967. Will sold his farm in 1972 and is retired, living in a small house on the property.

His sisters, — Mary married Joe Dupuis, Tamar married Wilfred Guest and Dolly married Ivor Guest.

#### THE DON JORDAN FAMILY

Don Jordan was born at Hazelmere on August 13, 1924. He took his schooling at the log school of Beaverbrook and completed it at the age of 16.

Don's dad joined the Veteran's Guard of World War II in the early spring of 1940. Don took over the farm during the war until it ended in 1945 at which time dad and Gerald returned home.

Herb started the Hazelmere store up again in 1946. The boys farmed together until Gerald took up residence at Rio Grande.

Don stayed on farming at Hazelmere during the summer and worked in Macklin's saw mill as a sawyer up the Monkman Pass for several winters. He married Doris Harding on June 17, 1952.

Doris was born at Elmworth on May 21, 1932 and took her schooling in the old log school there. She worked during threshing and busy times of the year at several of the neighbors until she took a job as a switchboard operator in Beaverlodge in 1951 and worked at this until she married Don.

They took up residence at Hazelmere and built their house on the farm. Donald Lane was born in Beaverlodge on July 30, 1954. Roxanne Faye was born in Beaverlodge on September 25, 1957. They took their elementary schooling at Elmworth and were bussed to Beaverlodge for their high school.

Donald graduated at 17 years in June 1972. After completing his schooling he worked as a checker for the Government on the Grassland Incentive Programme and P.F.A. He took his Private Pilots License at Wapiti Aviation at Grande Prairie in the spring of 1973. He is now working on an oil rig up the Monkman Pass. Roxanne is taking her grade eleven this year.

They took a trapline in 1973 on the west side of the



Narrowway river and built a cabin across the Narrowway river. It took a lot of hard work getting the material across the river. There were a few harrowing experiences, such as losing both dual wheels on the one-ton on one trip and another time forgetting their tent and having to sleep under the trees. One morning they woke up with the rain pouring in the cabin as the roof was only half completed. They all enjoyed building the cabin anyhow. It was finally completed and they spent three months trapping there, the winter of 1973 and '74.

Since 1961 they had twelve enjoyable trips together with family, into the B.C. interior, Vancouver Island, Kitimat, Banff, Jasper, also through Saskatchewan, North Dakota, across Montana, through Glacier National Park and up through Radium Hot Springs.



The Jordan family butchering a pig.

#### HERBERT JORDAN — by Louise Jordan

After the first World War, Herb Jordan came back from overseas and married Louise Massey of Fort Francis, Ontario on June 26, 1919. Next day we left for Vancouver and stayed with Herb's parents.

The same fall Herb and his brother-in-law Jim Russell went to Grande Prairie to look for land. The Peace River was coming to the fore at that time. They went 50 miles west of Grande Prairie and got two quarter sections of land side by side. They came back to Vancouver for the winter. March 17 we had a baby girl, Kathleen.

Jim and Ena Russell went north ahead of us and waited in a little one-roomed cabin on the hill going west from Grande Prairie. We went up with Kathleen, 6 weeks old, in May 1920 by train from Edmonton. We were held up for three days as there was a washout on the road, north. There were places where the train just crawled, plowed through water like a boat. In one place the coal tender cut through the ties and there we were. There was a misty rain falling. the men got out and built a fire by the track to keep warm. There was a heater in one end of the car and the trainmen would fill

it up with wood. It would get too warm, then go out and we would get chilly. An elderly nurse from Grande Prairie was on the train; I can't remember her name — she was so kind and held the baby at times. She took us and put us to bed in the caboose. We had a nice sleep. I felt as if we were going 4000 miles from nowhere. Jim and Ena Russell met us and we stayed overnight in their little cabin. They had three children, Ena, Joyce and Herbert. Next day by team and wagon we got out to a barn 12 miles southwest of Grande Prairie and slept in the loft. Next day we were near Jaque's place. It was tough going. What we didn't know was that the water had cut through the road and down went the rear end of the wagon, Ena and I with the four children were in the rear end. The men carried us to dry ground. We went to Jaque's house. No one was home but we went in and made lunch. The men slept in a granary and Ena and I and the children slept on the floor in the house.

Next day we got as far as Charlie Wards, Herb and Jim stayed with Billy Cargill. We women and the children slept upstairs on the floor of Ward's house. Next day we got out to a two-roomed cabin south of Red Willow. We stayed there till we cleared a patch of ground on our farm, and put up a tent to live in until we could build a cabin. Meanwhile Herb and Jim went out threshing, I was alone and scared to death.

There was no water so Herb dug a shallow well on the northwest corner of the farm, in a muskeg. We got a cow and tethered her near the well. I walked down (I mean ran) every morning and evening to milk the cow and carry a pail of water. It took all week to get enough water for washing every day for the baby and to do the weekly wash.

One lovely bright morning, a quiet day, warm and sunny, noises carried clearly, I had to leave the baby alone in the tent so I put her on the bed and gave her my hand mirror; she liked to look at the baby. I thought I had her safe so I grabbed the milk pail and ran down to milk. Before I got there I heard the most unearthly noises, a high shouting, I was so scared I thought something was at the tent, I ran all the way back and what met me at the door, in the soft dust, was the baby, pat-patting in the dust and lying on her tummy. She looked up and grinned at me. All I could see was her blue eyes and two little front teeth. The noise was an Indian on the road east of us riding a horse and yodelling at the top of his voice. I bathed the baby, put her back on the bed and took off again, slower this time. I realized that I'd just have to get over this being scared.

A fire had gone through the area the year before and there was a couple of stumps that everytime I looked at them I could see them move or thought I could. Believe me, it was tough; no close neighbors till Bill and Nellie Walker came across the road from us. That made everything better.

Herb and Jim came back from threshing. We carried poles and built a lean-to shack with grass and sods on the roof and a lean-to on the back for the cow. In the late fall Herb went out to the Burnt Hills to work in a logging camp. Money was very scarce and everything was so high. When Herb came home for Christmas, he said, "they want me to go back in two





Gerald and Mary Jordan beside their first car.



Mr. and Mrs. Herb Jordan.

weeks". I said, "I just can't stay alone any longer". So he stayed home and worked out for different people, cooked for Wapiti Brown's hunting parties, also for the crew which put the bridge over the Red Willow.

We built a log house when Kathleen was 18 months old. In September Gerald was born; 2½ years later Don came along. That was our family. In 1930 we applied for a post office and had it in the corner of the house. We had it for 34 years.

When Ewen MacDonell opened a store at Rio Grande, Herb worked there at times. Later Joe Barrett bought the store and put a stock at our place. We moved the post office, Hazelmere, out into the store. Later Joe sold the store to Bill Wilson of Croken and Wilson, so we managed the store for him. When Herb decided to join the army in World War II, he took the stock out and we still had the post office. Our son Gerald, 18 years old, joined the Army and went overseas. Herb thought he wanted to join up again; he went in the Veterans' Guard.

Don and I were left with the farm, I did the post office work. We got along O.K. When the war was over Herb came home and we opened the store on our own. The post office was raised to an accounting office. I loved the work and felt badly when we closed the store and gave up the post office; no one else wanted it.

We moved to Penticton in 1967 where we still reside. Kathleen, our only daughter married Oscar Gustafson, they have six children, Hannah, Ester, Oswald, Harold, Carol and Arnold and are now living in Beaverlodge. Gerald married Mary Harding. They have one daughter Donna and are farming at Rio Grande. Don married Doris Harding; they have two children, Donald and Roxanne. They still reside on the first homestead in the Hazelmere district.

#### **RALPH KOEBEL — By Alphonse Cook**

In the early spring, Sam Cook, Alphonse Cook and Ralph Koebel got Leo Cook to drive us across the Red Willow river as we were going to trap muskrats. The river was high, but we had seen tracks and thought we could make it across. We thought wrong. We tied the wagon box to the reach but when we got halfway across it tipped over and down stream we went. I was on the lead, reaching for bottom. Finally I made it. Sam made it too and a little farther on Leo made it. I lost a horse and a new gun. A. Riley was living close by so we called on him and he gave us enough clothes so that we could get rid of our wet ones. Then we got Jim Hilton to help us out and went home. No rats!

The next venture, Herb Jordan and I went up the river. This time on safe ice. We took our lunch for a few days, a cross cut saw and an axe and bed roll. We planned to cut logs for the Beaverbrook school. We slept on spruce boughs under spruce trees. The food was frozen most of the time and we were glad to get home. It is no fun to camp out in a tent at 50 below.

Then Tom Cook and I went threshing to Clairmont for Tom Corlett. One evening Tom sent us to another place to load up but Sam got in the wrong field and you should hear the "hell" Sam got from Tom at the supper table, so the next morning half his crew left. We hunted the stooks before daylight and after dark in the evening, usually about 6:00 A.M. for breakfast. Man, team, wagon and all for \$7.00 a day. How about that?

The following year I drove to Clairmont, put the horses in the barn and walked to Corletts. Jobs were scarce. Tom was just getting out from under the machine and I asked him if he had a full crew. He said, "Haven't you got your nerve, after quitting last fall." I had an answer for those fellows and I had one for him, I said, "I have the nerve of the devil always." "Had it", he said, "where is your team?" I said, "Over in town." He said, "Get them, starting right after dinner." We got along fine.

One good thing I did was to join the Elks. If my spelling and dictation is wrong, wait until you are 85, which is my age.

The Cook, Koebel and Querin families came from Hesson, Ontario after World War I, to homestead in the Hazelmere district. Sam and Leo Cook came in 1918 followed by John Cook, Ralph Koebel and Joe Querin a year later. Ralph married Agnes Querin, Sam Cook's wife is Christena Querin and Mary Cook married Joe Querin at Rolla.

Ralph Koebel had worked as a brakeman on the railway at Hesson. In the winters he did the same on the E.D. and B.C. If he was late returning to the farm in the spring his neighbours helped to put the crop in. He helped cut logs for the Beaverbrook school.



At local school or house parties Ralph was a good dance caller or auctioneer for box socials. He even taught people how to dance. Sometimes he organized concerts. The Kenny piano used to be lent for special affairs as weddings or Christmas school concerts.

There are four Koebel boys, Cyril, Pat, Frank and Kenneth.

About 1958 Koebels moved to Victoria where she died a few years later. He remarried and continues to live there.

#### FRANK LETENDRE

Frank married Evelyn Belcourt. Coming from near Grande Prairie they came to live on the west side of Hazelmere. During World War II, Frank spent some time clearing survey lines in the course of the construction of the Alaska Highway.

He is a registered big game guide, taking parties on hunting trips in the fall.

Sometimes he helps neighbours with farm work. He also has a trap line. An outgoing communicative man, he has friends far and wide.

The Letendre's have eight daughters and one son: Norma, Harriette, Gladys, Margaret, Edna, Dinah, Linda, Mavis and Robert.

#### FRANK J. SMITH (1893-1952) — by Norene Dunbar

Frank Smith was born in Ontongan, Michigan, in 1893. He came to Canada in 1917 and ran a dray and freight business in Saskatchewan.

He met his wife, Alberta Dutcher in Moose Jaw and they were married February 2, 1918. The young couple settled in Grande Prairie in 1919 where Frank continued his dray and freight business. Included in his activities was hauling freight down the Mackenzie river to the Peffer trading post at Aklavik. On many occasions his life was endangered as he and his team of four horses attempted to ford the Peace River in high spring waters. A round trip from Grande Prairie to Aklavik would take him approximately 28 days.

In 1927 he and his family moved to the Hazelmere district where he homesteaded for 20 years. During the 1930's he also acted as road foreman in the Rio Grande district. While in Hazelmere, Mrs. Smith acted as the community midwife and mortician. Smith Creek is named after them.

The Smiths moved to the Gordondale district in 1947 where he continued farming. He passed away at his farm in 1952. Mrs. Smith continued to manage the family farm until 1967. She now resides in the Country Squire Retirement Villa in Osoyoos, B.C.

Frank and Alberta had nine children — five daughters: Marlis Pryor, La Verne Davidson, Lynn Stoddard, Norene Dunbar, and Darlene Glenn; and four sons: Lyle (deceased 1973), Melvin, Morris and Howard.

#### WILSON PROWD — by Art Prowd

My father, Wilson Prowd, of Irish descent was born at Desboro, Ontario, where he farmed until his death. My mother, Margaret came from Ireland in 1906. She came to Grande Prairie with sons Art and Bob in 1927 and filed on a homestead at Hazelmere. We arrived there in November, 1928 and as there was no snow on

the ground, we camped under a spruce tree, with a tarpaulin over us. I was only 15 at the time. Mother sold the homestead in 1946 and I bought a farm at Woking. Mother died in 1958, age 84.

My wife, Martha had two daughters when we were married, Doris MacKenzie of Grande Prairie and Ilse Young of Woking.

#### OTHER SETTLERS

Alex McTavish, a Scotsman, came from Wolseley, Saskatchewan to homestead and take a soldier's grant. Besides being a farmer, Alex also worked as a camp cook. He could turn out a batch of bread just as tasty as "Betty Crocker's". He later sold his farm to Bert Dalgleish and spent his later years at Wembley.

Jim Cochrane would tell "bear stories" to any captive audience. He and Tom Wilson arrived in the country around 1928. Jim did homestead but his main source of interest was his trapline.

Tom Wilson bought land in the Hazelmere district and farmed for quite a few years. When Allan Dalgleish acquired his farm, he moved out to the warmer climate of British Columbia. You could rarely find a better neighbour than Tom Wilson.

A veteran of World War I, Bill Shear first saw Hazelmere in 1926. He and Bert Dalgleish had previously worked together in Calgary. When Bill came up for a short-term visit, he decided to stay. He was a great fan of the children; there wasn't any youngster who didn't like Bill Shear. Perhaps this was because he was always generous in his "candy donations". When he passed away in 1960, the community lost a dear friend and a reputable cribbage player.

Neils Bay was a polite Dane who often lent a helpful hand at threshing time. With four matched horses, he moved up from High River in 1929. Speeds acquired his property when Neils left to rejoin his brother in Toronto.

An elderly man, Beveridge, remained a year or two, then moved into Beaverlodge to resume his trade, French polishing. His first assignment was to brighten up the fine furniture of Mrs. Lyle. Then he moved through other homes doing truly professional work. From Beaverlodge he was employed in the Blowey Henry Furniture store in Edmonton.

At least two settlers were "different". Tony Rutlock carried two revolvers, a gun and a knife. Hector Botan settled alongside Johnny Coates and built a house without a door — so that the bears would not have ready access; he entered by the window.



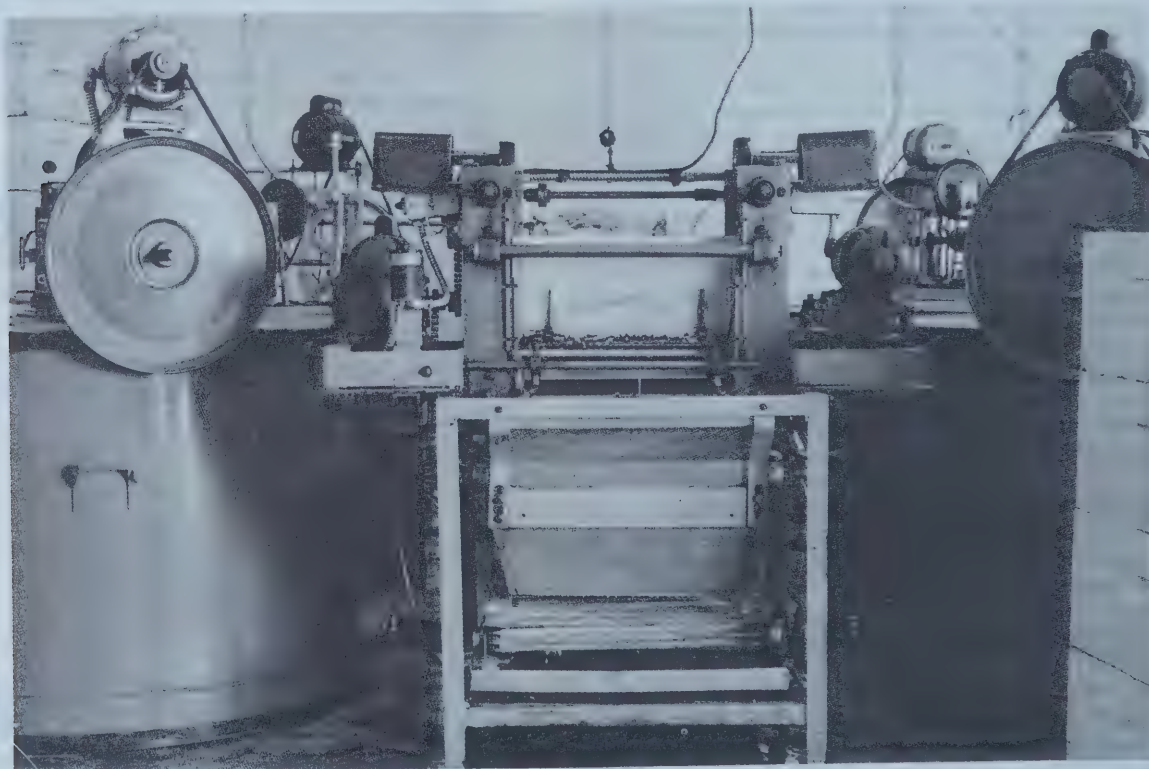




Beekeeper's Field Day, Beaverlodge Experimental Farm.



A 550-pound Colony of bees, Beaverlodge Experimental Farm, George Neely standing.



Automatic decapper used by Jack Smith apiary.



## HINTON TRAIL

Nowadays the Hinton Trail district comprises the settlement south of the Red Willow river and east of Elmworth. At one time the heart of the settlement south of the bridge was in the proximity of the Craigellachie school but improvement in road conditions and the centralization of schools put emphasis on "the corner" and here a store and a community hall were established.

The settlement includes three school districts: Haven, Riverside, and Craigellachie, all of which were important in their time. But centralization is the mode, hence the children attend school at Elmworth, Beaverlodge or Hythe, while social affairs are held at the Hinton Trail hall. However the community still flourishes and will remain.

### ANITI PAKKANEN (ANDY BAKKA)

Aniti Pakkanen, his wife and their two children lived on the banks of the Wapiti river in what became the Haven school district. They had immigrated from Finland and he worked in coal mines near Rocky Mountain House before coming to the Peace.

During most of his life by the Wapiti, Andy was a trapper. He travelled by dog team up that river to Nose Creek, up that stream to its headwaters and on to Hat Mountain. Long haired fur was popular and Andy was a skillful and enthusiastic trapper. Often he devised novel methods in trapping, snaring and mechanics. His choker snares can still be seen on Nose Creek trails. He hand forged useful bear traps, and years before the present brands were manufactured he constructed his own snow machine. With a used phonograph spring and a crooked stick he fashioned

hand saws which users said were superior to commercial bucksaws. Skiis to blueberry pickers — he made his own.

Once he captured and attempted to tame and drive a mature timber wolf; he found it generally intractable in harness.

Andy is survived by his wife, Amelia, now living in Central Park Lodge, Grande Prairie, his daughter, Elli — Mrs. Ray Hildenbrand of Exshaw, Alberta and his son Jorma of the Haven district.

### EDWARD BARRATT

Ed Barratt left his birthplace in Sherbrooke, Quebec and worked his way west through logging and lumber camps in United States and Canada. In his hands a double-bitted axe became a precision instrument. One winter in a woods camp near Edson he hand-hewed more ties than any other "hacker".

He and a partner bought a cook stove and a heater in Grande Prairie and provisions. The next morning they went to the Halcourt Post Office where they met Tom Metcalf. He told them that there was a shack in the jack pines across the Red Willow river. When morning came they started out at 46 below and a foot of snow. The shack was just a hole in the ground with a few logs over the top, 5 feet high. They stayed there for two days then went to the Wapiti river and lived in a pup tent.

There Webster Chase put them wise to a cabin across the river from the Ivor Guest place. They moved in and found it was a fairly good cabin, despite the fact that it had no windows, or door. A Chinook set in before Christmas and as they were afraid of the ice going out and leaving them on the wrong side of the river, they travelled west up river to the Mosley place. There they found good building timber, built a cabin



and moved in. They stayed there till the ice went out of the river. They then went looking for a homestead and found land that looked good not far from the river. They went to Grande Prairie and Ed filed on the S.W. 19-69-10-W6. The partner left for home and Ed came back and started clearing and put up a cabin. He made a road out to the settlement, bought a half section and farmed there till 1962.

In the early twenties Halcourt had a Literary Club to which Ed Barratt, culturally and athletically minded used to ride ten miles every two weeks to play tennis and take part in the debates and drama.

On the 5th of March 1933 Ed married Martha Schooler from Lewiston, Idaho who had a little girl, Betty, 3 years old. They adopted a boy from Edmonton, who was also 3 years old, and they called him "James Peter".

Ed sold his farm to his daughter Betty and her husband Peter Roche and moved to Mission City. Son James works in Vancouver. In 1969 Peter and Betty sold the farm to Ed Schneider and moved to Mission City. They have one adopted son, Michael.

Ed Barratt was thrifty and energetic, also he learned to be a skillful trapper and hunter. For years he made more money trapping than he did farming. In hard times he provided wild meat for many district settlers.

During the early years he hauled much grain to Wembley with sleigh and grain tank, making one trip every second day. Old-timers will well remember his fine grey team, Paul and One-eyed Sam. Also they may remember his black dog, Oscar which always cleaned his feet before coming into the house. As Ed prospered he bought a Hart-Parr tractor and a model A Ford, some of the first in the district.

#### **DAN BAILEY — by Ian McEachern**

Big Dan was a bushman, probably the strongest man that ever lived at Hinton Trail. He was a kindly man, widely known for his generosity and wit.

Dan was five feet ten inches and 220 pounds. When he stood in a doorway there was little room on either side of his massive shoulders. His neighbor, Pa Spence was six feet one inch and rivalled Dan for poundage. They had many good-natured arguments as to who was the biggest. Dan built and hewed the logs for a number of his neighbors' houses.

I knew Dan first the summer of 1917 but Bill Thompson senior tells me that Dan had built a log house for his brother Alex in 1916.

Dan was on the next quarter east of us. The Hinton Trail, the pack trail to Hinton ran right through our place on south to the Wapiti.

About 1921 Dan was appointed bridge foreman for our area and he and his crew built many of the bridges in the district.

When an elderly neighbor lady remarked to Dan on the dryness of the snow, Dan said "Yes, he had put on a tubful to melt for breakfast while he did the chores and when he came in there was naught but a bit of dust in the bottom of the tub!"

Brother Erwin and I were loading logs on a wagon for Jim McGovern whose barn had burned down. I was only 12 and the logs were big jack pine. We had a

big log rolled half way up two leaning poles when Dan walked up. He picked it up by the middle and threw it on the wagon. The log weighed at least 500 pounds.

Dan chewed tobacco and snooze, both at once. The fall of 1923 he took ill and the doctor in Grande Prairie told him he had cancer and to go home and put his affairs in order. On New Year's Day, 1924, at the age of 48 he passed away and I doubt if there were any in the neighborhood who didn't shed a tear at his passing.

#### **ROBERT BEATTY — by Ian McEachern**

Bob was a rangy six footer and a good neighbour. He lived to the south east of us and built his frame shack the summer of 1917. Bob was a bachelor, 22 years old at the time. He had borrowed tools from a neighbour at Halcourt and one day in the fall set out on foot to return them. While he was gone, a fire swept over the area.

Brother Erwin was fighting the fire in a barn south of us. Dad, Doug and I were fighting fire at home. My oldest brother was crippled from an ax cut in his foot, so he jumped on a pony and raced the fire to Beatty's shack. The fire beat him and a lumber pile beside the house was on fire when he got there. With the aid of an old smock, Clarence beat the fire out and saved the shack.

We fought fire spring and fall every year for seven years until roads were built and land was broken up to make fire guards.

Bob and Dad invested in a forge and anvil and did their own blacksmith work. One time Bob was shoeing George, his big grey horse and George kicked him and broke his fore finger. Dad set his finger and splinted it up. There were no doctors nearer than Grande Prairie.

Bob bought a quarter on his east and later bought the Storey's land two miles south.

In 1928 Bob sold out to the Ingledews and moved to Spirit River.

We heard he married a widow and later moved to Vancouver where he died.

#### **JACK BIRCH — by Ian McEachern**

Jack Birch came to Hinton Trail from Saskatchewan. He had horses, farming equipment, a wife and two daughters, Margaret, about 9 years and Hazel, about 4 years old.

Jack had known the Jones boys in Saskatchewan and he filed on land across from Len Jones' land about 3 miles south of where Hinton Trail hall now stands.

Birch and Sanderson teamed up to buy Webster Chases's little home-made saw mill. Jack was a broad-shouldered Irishman about 45 years old. Later he sold his share in the mill to Sandersons and bought 25 pure bred sheep. Jack's land was poor and he didn't have much luck with crops.

His sheep were killed by dogs, probably Bill Phipps' sleigh dogs, but he couldn't prove it so got nothing out of it. In January 1934 Margaret was married to Henry Karr.

About 1940, much older now and somewhat discouraged, Jack moved down on his daughter Margaret's homestead as Henry had gone to Fort McMurray to work in a salt mine. Margaret and baby Joan had followed Henry.



Down on the river in 1942, Jack had a wonderful garden. An electrical storm passed along the river and when Jack got home his best cow and a fine 9 month old heifer lay dead of a lightning bolt. The electricity had danced across the table between Hazel and Mrs. Birch. Next day the crop on Jack's own place was hailed out completely.

We bought Jack's famous Guernsey cow. Frank Cage and I bought his garden. He sold everything and went to B.C.

Hazel married Tom Smith and went to live at Abottsford, B.C. Henry and Margaret live at Salmon Arm where he barbers. Mr. and Mrs. Birch are long gone but Jack's fiddle playing will always be remembered.

### FRANK E. BROWN

Frank E. (Wapiti) Brown was one of the early settlers of what was to become the Haven school district. He homesteaded in 1916 a mile from the Wapiti river. Some excerpts from his autobiography help to tell his story.

"I was born in Marchand, Indiana County, Pennsylvania, September 17, 1862.

"My father, William C. Brown, was also born in Indiana County, Pennsylvania. His father, David C. Brown was a native of Virginia, being the son of Jeremiah Brown, who was born in Ireland."



Wapiti Brown's outfit crossing the Wapiti river, 1936.

The Wapiti Brown cabin.

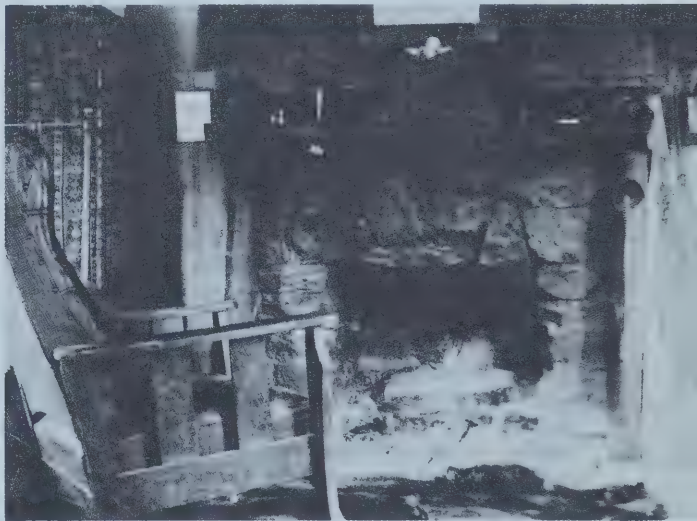


"From the time I was old enough to read a wildwest novel, I intended to go West. After making arrangements with three other young men to go along with me in October, 1888, I started, leaving Annie and our two children, Paul and Fred, with her folks until I found the right spot. At the last minute my friends failed me and I went alone. I had little or no idea where I was going except, to go West as far as the Pacific Ocean would let me."

In the spring of 1889 Frank bought 173 acres of land 9 miles from Spokane, Washington near what became known as Brown's Mountain. It was here that his daughter, Helen (Mounce) was born. In 1896 as the settlement began to close in, the family moved to the new district of Clarkston, Washington on the Snake river where they built one of the first homes. Later Frank was to become the first Mayor of Clarkston.

After several years of ill health Annie died in 1911. Again the settlement closed in and Frank moved to the remote Craig Mountain area where he homesteaded and raised cattle. It was while he was there in 1913 that he met and married Miss May Niles, a native of Madison, Wisconsin.

"In 1917, wanting to continue my business as an out-



The interior of the Wapiti Brown cabin.



fitter and also to find grass and hay for cattle, I went to the Peace River Country in Canada. While there, I filed on a wild-hay meadow 450 miles northwest of Edmonton, Alberta.

"The next spring with 2 cars of settler's effects and 40 head of cattle and horses we moved to our new home on the Wapiti river."

"In January 1918, while we were wintering in Clarkston, I fought Judge J. H. Clear a 5-round contest with 8 oz. gloves, it being the main event of the evening. I was 55 years of age. The referee called it a draw, but I really won. The receipts were quite large and went to the City Fire Department to buy an automobile chemical engine."

Frank sold his homestead near the Wapiti to his son Paul and moved again to a more remote homestead in the Hazelmere district.

He was known internationally as a "big game" guide and outfitter. Articles were written about him in "Outdoor Life" and other outdoor magazines. Until his death in 1946 at age 84 he remained active. He rode horseback 13 miles twice a week to get his mail.

His widow, May retired in Pasadena, California where she died in 1973 at age of 95. The Brown family, Paul, Fred and Helen are all deceased.

#### PAUL BROWN

Paul Brown was born in Indiana County, Pennsylvania in March 1884. He came west with his parents to settle near Spokane, Washington in 1889 and later moved to Clarkston, Washington in 1896.

He left home at age 13 and became a jockey. In 1901 he rode the winner of the Dominion Day Handicap, feature race of the season in Vancouver, British Columbia.

When weight became a problem he quit riding and homesteaded near the Snake River in Idaho where he raised and dealt in cattle. During World War I he bought horses for the U.S. Cavalry.

In 1928 he moved with his wife Kathryn and her daughter Joyce to what is now the Haven district and settled on his father's place. Here he continued in a mixed farming enterprise until his death in 1963.

In the forties Paul got his mail at Halcourt. When the roads were heavy the Browns would hitch up their four dogs and go the 10 miles for the mail as they were faster than horses.

He is survived by his wife Kathryn now living in Spokane, Washington, his daughter Joyce of Spokane, his son Jim of Cheney, Washington and his son Tom now living on the old Brown homestead.

#### THE FRANK CAGE FAMILY — by Doris Cage

Frank was the third son of Wesley Cage of Halcourt. He homesteaded on the N.W. 9-70-10 in 1926 and broke about 30 acres between 1926 and 1927. At that time he was well known for his saddle horse Star, which he used to ride as pick-up man at the various rodeos. He used to take a string of broncs to the various sports from Rolla, B.C. to Grande Prairie. The famous Halcourt Dahl was one of his string and she was never truly ridden by anyone.

In 1928 he helped Andy Laing, the road boss in those days build a road through the slough near Elmer



Bill Smith and musical friends at the homestead.

Dahls. It was there that he met the Ingledew family coming in to settle on the Jim McGovern farm.

In 1931 Frank married Doris Ingledew, daughter of Robert and Louise Ingledew. In 1932 their daughter Barbara was born. She is now married to Stan Ash and lives in the Gordondale area. They have 3 children, 2 girls and a boy. Allan was born in 1936 and is married to Betty Senenko. They live at Terrace, B.C. and have three daughters and two sons. Marie, the second girl was born in 1938 and is married to Frank Collins. They have 4 sons, and live in Beaverlodge.

During the thirties things were tough. I remember one winter night we were out of coal oil and low on food. After supper Fletcher Smith knocked on the door and wanted Frank to take Mrs. Smith in to the doctor. At that time we had the fastest team on this side of the river. That \$3.00 we got from Smithy bought the necessities of life for a few days and it seemed to change our luck. In 1940 son Jack was born. He is married to Dorothy Davies of Minburn, Alberta and they have two girls and two boys. Jack lives in the district, near the Wapiti and is a beekeeper.

Jim was born in 1945 and lives on the home place. Lee was born in 1946 and is married to Karen Herbert of Prince George. They have one son and live in Prince George, B.C. Around the time that Lee was born Frank hauled the lumber for the big house with four horses from the Cook mill near Stony Lake. It used to take him two days to make a trip.

Judy was born in 1951 and passed away in 1957. Janet, the youngest child was born in 1954 and is now in a nurse's training program in Edmonton.

Frank Cage never took life too seriously. When meeting a stranger on the road he would introduce himself with "Helio, I'm Frank Cage! I'm great on the good-time stuff." The Cages kept open house and no one ever left their portals without a fund of stories. And if it wasn't a story it was a prank. Folks were wary about comments with which Frank greeted them, for as likely as not he would be pulling their leg.

But horses were Frank's life. He could stage a fake runaway with team and sleigh by merely shaking the lines over their backs. Then in an instant he would have them under control by speaking quietly to them.

He became afflicted with rheumatoid arthritis in his knees and fingers, thus bringing in the horses from field work was a painful ordeal. With brother Jim, Frank took baths in the Ft. Nelson hot springs and by supreme will power exercised his fingers until they became quite supple. There was one less ray of sunshine when Frank passed away in February 1970 at the age of 62.



### ANGUS CAMPBELL — by Lena Campbell

Angus Willard Campbell and Lena Mary Brown were married on October 6, 1925, at Roseisle, Manitoba. We farmed a year in Manitoba, then moved to Riley, Alberta where Angus was in the hardware business with his brother, Ern. Then we got the "Peace River Bug" and moved to the Wapiti in the spring of 1927. Angus had won many trophies in the horse classes at the Miami and Carmen, Manitoba summer fairs and stock shows. He picked up a team of bay Clydes at Riley — along with a cute pony, "Mollie" which later disappeared mysteriously.

In the spring of the year the mud was terrible. We drove from Grande Prairie to the Red Willow district where we took up a homestead and built a little log cabin. Angus' brother lived with us at that time. I was very particular about "dove-tailing" the corners! We lived in a tent all summer and the mosquitoes were so bad we had to use 'mosquito-bars'. Of course the odd mosquito managed to get in anyway! I picked scads of wild strawberries that summer and preserved them, but always had to smear my hands and face with oil of tar or citronella. "612" had not been heard of then!

Game was plentiful; Angus enjoyed hunting so I learned to can meat for summer use.

Our closest neighbors were the Charles Smith family, Steve and Lizzie Blanchard and the Sanderson family. Being close to the Wapiti river, we often walked down to the "Chase Place" and fished for rainbow trout. We proved up, sold our place and went to Cecil Lake to live on a second homestead for a time. Then we took a trip to southern B.C., but after looking around, we decided to come back to the Peace River country and settled in Dawson Creek in the summer of 1933, where Angus was in the 'water' business for about a year. He then took a job as second man, working for Dave Sutherland in the Northern Grain Elevator, now the National. Dave left the country shortly after that and Angus took over his job. He bought grain at Dawson Creek for about nine years, then joined the army in the fall of 1940. He spent 14 months in the army in the Provost Corps and some time in eastern Canada.

Angus Junior was born in Calgary, October 10, 1940 and now resides in Dawson Creek with his wife Violet (nee Remple) and son Angus. Don was born in Dawson Creek on November 27, 1942, has three children, Dana, Beverly, and Wayne, and lives in Manitoba.

Angus Senior was working as Road Boss when he died at Dawson Creek in September, 1951.

### WEBSTER CHASE — by Cora Chase

Webster Smith Chase migrated from Ontario to the U.S.A. Chase had been living in the Molson, Havilla area of Washington, east of Oroville, near the border. His work was threshing and logging. Neighbours, in-laws, and Gertie, his wife, all called him Chase.

In the early winter of 1917, Webster Chase and his family arrived from the State of Washington. Though they intended to make the trip all the way by horse team and wagon, this had not worked out. One of the horses did not meet the standards required for entering Canada so the horses and wagon were sold south of the border and the trip was made by train.

Webster Chase was a tall, erect man of 46, grey-haired but never bald, friendly but outspoken, and never overweight. Gertie, his second wife was in her mid-twenties, good-natured and very shy. The family consisted of three daughters; Alice, Cora and Florence, and Austin the 14-year old son by Chase's first marriage.

The destination was intended to be Spirit River or Peace River, but after leaving the family at the Immigration Hall in Edmonton, and scouting on ahead, the Red Willow-Wapiti area was decided upon.

They lived at first in one of Jack Pettit's cabins and Chase and Mr. Pettit dug and sold coal from the bank of the Red Willow River.

The next fall — 1918, another daughter, Ruth, was born in the little Pettit cabin. Mrs. Karr acted as midwife.

During that winter, Austin died suddenly from the flu which was sweeping the country at that time. The Wapiti place had by this time been filed for a homestead so he was buried on top of the hill overlooking the river.

In the spring the family moved to the Wapiti place, now called Wapiti Gardens. They lived in a tent until the poplar cabin was ready, with its black dirt floor and sod roof. The next ten years were spent proving up on the homestead and trying to make a living for an ever-growing family. This meant living the required time on the place and making the specified improvements. Chase was not a farmer at heart. His love was machines and he had quite a talent for running and servicing them. He acquired horses, cows, chickens and simple machinery and got to work plowing and fencing. Not much clearing was needed as a fire had gone through not many years before.

There was always a big garden as the soil was ideal and there were hay fields and eventually a field of grain. There were fish in the river, game birds, moose and deer for hunting, berries on the hillside and in the spring, plenty of wild "greens". Also, as Chase often said, he was an expert at "running his face", so the family was the rosiest and healthiest in the district.

And the shyest!

They did not live at the Wapiti all the time, in fact they moved several times a year. Most of the babies were born while the family was living in abandoned houses around Halcourt and Hinton Trail. This was so that the children could go to school and so that Chase could have the family nearby while he was working out driving tractors or threshing or so that the midwife, Mrs. McEachern, would not have to travel so far from her home to deliver a baby.

Some of the places they occupied for a time were the Shaw place, north of old Halcourt, the Finnigan place, and deserted homesteads of the Carlyles and Sylvesters.

Ruby and Edna were born in a small frame cabin on the McEachern place but there had been other moves between. Pearl was the first to be born at Wapiti place, on October, 1923.

In September, 1925, Earl, the first boy was born at the Sylvester place.

At this time the sawmill was built on the south-east



side of the sand ridge, not far from the Wapiti in a stand of jack pine. In the spring, the whole family moved there for a month or so before the snow left the ground and Gertie cooked for the crew. Chase enjoyed making lumber and it was much in demand. The mill business went well, with the able help of Vic McKay and his brother Henry, Len Jones and other local men but later the mill was moved to the Wapiti homestead.

In 1926, Gertie's brother, Ed Churchman, came up from Washington bringing their mother. But Alice Churchman did not survive the summer and was buried in the Halcourt cemetery. Ed filed on the homestead down river from Chase but did not stay to prove up on it.

Cars began to appear about the country in summer and people were anxious to see the roads improved. Chase used his influence and his equipment to bring a graded road almost to the Wapiti. He bought an old Ford pick-up and that last summer, with the whole family pushing it up the hills, and stopping at least four times to mend blown-out tires, they made the trip to Halcourt hill from the Wapiti in an hour or so instead of the usual four hours.

Chase owned a threshing machine and the saw mill and things were looking better in 1927. But a whole "raft" of girls were growing up uneducated. Gertie was becoming increasingly unhappy with her isolated life, and Chase was getting that "the grass is greener on the other side of the mountain" look in his eyes.

One autumn day, there arrived a tall thin man with a "goatee". He was Mr. Belvedere from Okanagan Falls, B.C. He wanted to trade his house and lot for the homestead. The family talked it over. Okanagan Falls was not far from the U.S. border, not far from relatives and friends. It had a mild climate and had a public school. It was decided. The homestead was traded sight unseen for a three-room frame house on half an acre of sand. Also there were a few peach and cherry trees. They had a sale of the farm equipment. Mr. Sanderson and Mr. Birch took over the sawmill. The household furnishings were nothing to worry about but Col Hogg was the expert auctioneer and nearly \$1000 was netted — a fortune in those times!

Before Christmas, Dorothy was born at the Wapiti. The time of departure was early in March. Vic and Violet McKay drove them through the snow to Wembley to the railway station. For most of the family this was the first time farther from home than Halcourt.

At Okanagan Falls, Chase obtained a truck and went logging for Penticton Sawmills. The depression years were very hard, especially since four more children were born, three girls and a boy, bringing the family to 13. And here, food could not be gleaned from the dry sand or hunted in the woods. It had to be bought and paid for.

Ten years later, on March 3, 1938, a year and a half after the birth of his son Leonard, Chase passed away of a heart attack at the age of sixty-seven. Gertie died in June 1970.

Alice now lives at Osoyoos, B.C.

Cora Chase, Oliver, B.C. Box 874, V0H 1T0

Florence Jones, R.R. No. 2, Sardis, B.C.

Ruth Mallory, Okanagan Falls, B.C.

Ruby Chase, Osoyoos, B.C.

Edna Schmunk, Oliver, B.C.

Pearl Greenslade, Edmonton, Alberta

Earl Chase, Oliver, B.C.

Dorothy McLean, Sicamous, B.C.

Iris Schilling, Darfield, B.C.

Mary Manning, Okanagan Falls, B.C.

#### FRANK CLARKE — by Ian McEachern

Frank Clarke was born in Ontario. When 18 years old he was helping his brother Jim roof a house. One morning he was late for work and during the altercation that followed, Jim, six foot one inch and 300 pounds, walked over to little brother and picked him up by his neck and seat and threw him off the roof. Frank claimed he landed on his feet running and never looked back. He packed a suitcase and caught a train for Saskatchewan. At Elbow, Frank got married, and adopted a niece and nephew, Fanny and Bill Colby, neither of whom were very strong. Fanny died a few years later of diabetes. Frank lost many of his cattle in the ten-year drought that hit southern Saskatchewan.

They moved north with horses and some equipment to Swan Lake, B.C. After a few unprofitable years Frank, his wife Annie and Bill Colby moved to the Pettit farm in the valley of the Red Willow. There Frank raised good crops and mined coal on the side. With Bill's help they did very well.

Clarke sold his river valley land and bought Mel Sutton's place at Hinton Trail where he farmed for a number of years. Bill Colby died and some time later the Clarkes moved to town where Annie died after a few years. Frank himself passed away in 1972 at age 89.

#### THE CRAIGELLACHIE SCHOOL

The Craigellachie School District was formed in 1921 but the log schoolhouse was not finished until January 1923. Names for the school were submitted and the entry of William Greig was accepted, Craigellachie being his home town in Scotland. Mrs. Haddock was the first teacher.

Apart from educational matters the Craigellachie school was a very active centre and a surprising amount of talent was unearthed among the settlers. Much of this is recounted in the family records.



Pupils at the Craigellachie School, 1936-37.



Craigellachie School.

### NEIL DAWSON AND WILLIAM PHIPPS — by Ian McEachern

Strangely enough, in a land of axes and mattocks, my dad had the only grind-stone in the neighbourhood.

On Sunday morning in the summer the bachelors would converge on our place to sharpen axes, discuss politics with father and hope for a woman-cooked dinner. Mother wasn't always too happy with the deal as father invariably asked them all in for dinner.

There was Bill Phipps, Neil Dawson, Bob Beatty, Harry Mouser and occasionally Ed Barratt or the Jones boys. Brother Doug and I didn't care much for this either as we often got involved in turning the grind-stone. Later on we got smart enough to take off hunting or fishing when we saw the sun glint of an axe coming up the lane.

Bill Phipps lived 3 miles south of us and the Jones boys hauled logs for his pole and dirt-roofed shack the summer of 1920. Bill was a rough and ready bushman about 5 feet 9 inches, 160 pounds and 45 years old. He hewed ties in the winter and cleared his land in summer. The Jones boys broke and farmed his land because Bill never did acquire horses and farm equipment.

Neil Dawson came from Montana with a Model T Ford touring car. He filed on land across from Phipps and there was a good deal of good-natured rivalry between the two.

Neil was an axeman too, about Bill's size and a few years younger. Where Bill was rough and ready, Neil was very precise and particular. His buildings were neatly built, his dove-tail corners beautifully done.

Neil stayed with us the winter of 1921-22. He and brother Clarence drove two of our teams to haul posts, rails and seven sets of logs from the swamps and jack pine ridges east of us. Father and brother Erwin stayed in a tent in the bush and cut the timber. Erwin trapped weasels and muskrats in a nearby swamp as a sideline. Neil got house logs, barn logs and fencing logs for his farm out of the deal.

The summer of 1922 he traded the car for four horses. Two of the horses were okay. One though, a fine looking horse, was sweenied and lame, and the old mare was a kicker, "Kicking Nell".

Neil managed his farming until the summer of 1926.

Father went to a sale at Wembley to buy a gang plow. Dawson was there buying lever harrows. But as he had already bought more lever harrows than he could possibly use, father and Webster Chase got together and agreed that Neil had gone "queer". He was put into an institution and the last we heard of him he was building chicken houses and runs, and quite happily looking after a large flock of chickens.

Bill Phipps got his arm broken in a tie camp and could no longer work in the bush. He got a trapline out west and one day his pony came out of the bush alone. A neighbour saw the pony and suspected trouble. He and another neighbour found Bill ill so Ewen Ross took him home. Two days later he died of pneumonia. This was the winter of 1937-38. He is buried at Halcourt with Dan Bailey and many other old timers.

### PETE DOMERACK

Pete came from Poland in 1928. In order to purchase his ticket from the C.P.R. he sold two acres of land to raise the necessary \$210.

Upon arriving he obtained harvest work near Edmonton. Later in Drumheller he met countrymen from his home place in Poland, Charlie Gusnyck and John Archic. These men later became neighbours of his in the Beaverlodge area. They advised him to look for a homestead at Hinton Trail.

However, he met Jack Bendosky and Steve Bork when he arrived here and this led to getting Earl Jones to drive him about to find land. Then he "straight away" went to Grande Prairie to file on the homestead he'd chosen.

He worked for Earl Jones and bought a log house from him. Kindly Jack Bendosky loaned him a team with which to do the hauling.

After working a few years for Paul Brown he became Roy Demsky's right hand man from 1937 to 1939. Then he went to live on his homestead part of the time.

During the depression years he was unable to raise enough money to bring his family from Poland. He tells of doing ten acres of brushing for \$25 and being unable to sell a cow for \$15.

In Poland political upheavals created havoc in his family. His wife was shot, his son was wounded and died and his daughter was never heard of again. In spite of all this Pete has remained calm and has maintained a friendly attitude to all he has met in a strange land.

Of late years he has looked after Conley Martin's and Don Sherk's chores, is now in a comfortable little house near the elevators in Beaverlodge. He is able to walk into the town and visit his old friends as they come in from the country and he keeps happy.

### MR. AND MRS. JAMES DUNBAR

Mr. and Mrs. James Dunbar and family of eight boys and two girls left Scotland for Canada in 1928. Their oldest son James who was already married stayed in Scotland.

They landed in the Hinton Trail district where they homesteaded a half section of land and started farming. Son Joe did not like farming so the following fall he left and went to work in Toronto. Son John stayed



for three years, proved up his homestead, then went back to Scotland.

The Dunbar family left Scotland to get away from mining as James had been a coal miner all his life and was told that the coal dust that had settled in his lungs was endangering his life. They thought the solution would be to emigrate to Canada.

Many were the escapades and events in their new life. They had come from the Old Country and had no experiences with cattle and horses. One fall they decided to butcher a steer. Joe, who was home for a visit from Toronto asked if he could shoot the steer. His father said, "Yes, and shoot the first one that comes out." In the meantime Mrs. Dunbar's prize milk cow had got loose and was with the other cattle. Wouldn't you know it? She was the first one through the door. Bang went the rifle and down went the milk cow. Mother Dunbar was plenty annoyed. The meat was not too tough and made good eating.

In the course of time they settled down to farming and despite the depression, drought, wet falls and hail they made a fair go of it. When the depression hit in the '30's James had to go back to the mines. They worked and operated a mine on the banks of the Red Willow river until 1940 when the war broke out.

Sons Bob, Bill, Alec and Sam joined the army and the air force. James could not get help to operate the mine so had to close it down. After the war was over and the boys were home again he sold the farm and moved to Edmonton.

Sons Robert and Dave still live in the Hinton Trail district, Sam and Alec in Grande Prairie. Bill lives in Vancouver, Doug in Edmonton.

One daughter Grace, married to Pete Baker of the Elmworth district died in 1956. They had two children, Maureen and Billy. The remainder of the family are scattered throughout Canada.

Mrs. Dunbar died in Edmonton in 1967 and James still lives in Edmonton and has reached the ripe old age of 93. He still has good health, likes to watch T.V. and discusses world affairs.

#### **ROBERT DUNBAR AND FAMILY — by Martha Dunbar**

Robert Dunbar landed in the Hinton Trail district in May 1928. His family, the James Dunbars had left Scotland where they had been miners and came to Canada to try their hand at farming. However, they hit the hungry 30's and had to go back to mining to help make a living. So Bob farmed in the summer time and mined in the winter along the Red Willow river, their own mine. In 1939 he bought the Bickner quarter NW 4-70-10-W6. On New Year's Day 1940, he married me, Martha Ingledew and our first home was down in Bill Fraser's yard so that Bob could be close to his work in the mine, of which he was the operator.

In June 1940 he enlisted in the Canadian army and trained in Calgary with the Calgary Highlanders until he was sent overseas in January 1941. I lived in Calgary while he was there, then moved back to Hinton Trail to live with my folks, the Robert Ingledews until his return in September 1945.

Our daughter Jean was born in July 1941. From 1942

to 1945 I worked in the Hinton Trail store, which at that time was owned by Fletcher Smith.

Bob was wounded in August 1944 when the Canadians were closing the Falaise Gap, in France. He returned to his outfit a month later.

On his return to civilian life we purchased the quarter on which we are now living, NE 13-70-11 from Charlie Kenerva and Isaac Hill. Money was a bit more plentiful than in the 30's but we still had to watch the pennies to make ends meet. We did our farming in conjunction with my brothers Harry and Bob Ingledew until 1968 when brother Bob died in May and Harry sold out and went to live in Parksville. Then we farmed on our own for a year or so.

In 1956 we sold the few cattle we owned and bought the Hinton Trail store from Bill Smith and with the help of our daughter Jean, we operated it for two years on the corner. In 1958 Jean went to work in Beaverlodge, so to be able to run our store and the farm as well we moved the store to the yard where we lived. In 1961 we took over the Hinton Trail post office, which had been operated for years by Spurgeon Spence. In 1968 we closed both the store and the post office. The mail then was delivered to the Hinton Trail corner to mail boxes.

In 1970 we rented the farm to the Sawchuk brothers, Joe and Frank and Bob went to work as a commissionaire at the Beaverlodge Radar Base. Our son Bill was born in 1949, and son Rod in 1952. Our daughter Jean is married to Roy Quinn and lives in the Elmworth district. They have three children, Tanny, Lorie and Robbie. Bill works in the Forestry in Prince George and Rod works for the A.G.T. in Grande Prairie.

#### **BOB DUNBAR SENIOR**

Bob Dunbar was a miner in Scotland. In 1907 he decided to try the new land so he emigrated to the United States. War came along and in 1915 he went up to Canada and enlisted in the Canadian Army. While in England he married Rose Mann, an English girl.

After the war they returned to the States, where daughter Rose was born. They then went to Drumheller, where he worked in the mines. Later he worked on the steel when it went into Grande Prairie.

He homesteaded in the Hinton Trail area on the N.W. of 16-70-10 and N.E. of 15-70-10. He also had a soldier's grant. They lived on there for a few years and then sold to Bob's brother James, who had emigrated from Scotland in 1928. They then moved to Merrit, B.C. where their son Robert was born. In 1934 Rose died and Bob lived with the two children till war broke out in 1939. Then he again joined the Canadian Army and served in Canada for the duration. He was drowned while fishing near Nanaimo just after the war.

#### **JAMES AND ANNIE ELSENDER**

James Elsander was born in Newcastle-on-Tyne, England on November 28, 1893. At the age of twelve he followed the family tradition and started working in the coal mines, where he worked until the start of World War I. He then joined the Imperial Army serving with the Northumberland Fusiliers. After serving for nearly four years he was wounded in action in



Mr. and Mrs. George Elsender.

France near the end of the war and was returned to England.

In 1919 he emigrated to Canada on the ship *Metagama*. This ship was the first to be sunk in World War II. He then settled in Carbon, Alberta where he continued his career as a coal miner.

Here he met Annie, born Annie Cox in 1892 in Bishop's Castle, England. Annie also emigrated from England in 1919 on the ship *Athenia* with two small children, Lucy and Margaret, from a previous marriage. James and Annie were married in Calgary on April 9, 1923.

James was an active football and soccer player in his younger years, playing for Drumheller and Carbon teams.

Although quite successful at mining in the Carbon area, James had heard of opportunities in the Evansburg and Peace River country. In June of 1926, he journeyed north. He spent some time at Evansburg, then continued farther north. While in the Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie area he heard of land open for homestead and filed on the S.E. quarter of 16-70-10.

In the spring of 1927 Annie and the family joined him (Lucy, Margaret, Mary, George and Tom). They had no house so they lived in Jack Pettit's place on the Red Willow, where James, known as Geordie to most of his neighbors was mining coal with Buck Schaneul. That summer he started to clear land on his homestead and built a new log house for his family. This house had one of the first pitched lumber roofs in the area.

He continued to clear his land entirely by hand. During the winter months he mined coal along the Red Willow and in the Evansburg areas.

Since his major work was coal mining, not much farming was done. As a result he didn't prove up his homestead. In 1930, the family returned to Carbon where opportunities for work were somewhat better as the great depression had begun. They intended to stay only a little while but were there until 1934.

Kathleen was born there in 1931. James was gassed in the mines and as a result was forced to quit mining.

This forced the decision to return to the homestead. They were fortunate to be able to return and move into the log house. This house still stands on its original location three miles east of Hinton Trail. Rose was born in the log house in November 1934.

James set about learning the art of farming in earnest this time. He finished clearing more land and became a full time farmer. Annie says he cleared trees and bush with a passion since he knew only the prairies at the time. In fact he cleared off so many trees that she had to plant some for shade and a wind break around the house.

James and Annie lived in the log house and farmed until the fall of 1951 when they moved to Grande Prairie. They like to tell many stories of their happy time on the farm. Annie tells of the time they had shot a few squirrels and rabbits to sell the fur and buy some molasses and sugar to make taffy for Christmas. The children were waiting eagerly while she made it. She set it out in the snow to cool. A few minutes later they looked out the window to see how it was and there was the old milk cow licking her chops. She had eaten nearly all of it. One can laugh at it now, but it wasn't so funny in those hard days.

James' two sons, George and Tom continued to farm after James and Annie left the farm in 1951, until Tom's untimely death in 1970. George presently carries on with the farming.

For the past several years James and Annie have resided at the Pioneer home in Hythe. In 1973 they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a large family reunion and celebration at the home of their son George, just down the road from the old log home.

A daughter, Lucy married Harry Mouser: They have three children and farm at Hinton Trail. Margaret and her family live in Vancouver and Fort St. John. Mary and John Kuchera and their family live in Bemidji, Minnesota. George married Sheila Nikolaus. They have three children and farm at Hinton Trail. Tom married Dorothy Wald and they have three girls. Dorothy and her children live in Grande Prairie. Katie married Alvin Britton. They have four children and farm at Hayfield. Rose married Hartley Daniels. They have two boys and live in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

#### AUGUST GRAF

August Graf was born in Bismark, North Dakota. In 1927 the family came to the Peace River country and landed at Sexsmith where they lived for a while.

On Christmas Day, 1937 August married Margaret Adams, and almost missed the wedding, as it was 40 below and he had to put a torch under the Model T Ford to warm it up. The wires caught fire and that was almost the end of the car.

They have lived on the homestead, the N.W. 26-69-11-W6 ever since but have gradually acquired three more quarters of land.

August is a firm believer in the stook threshing which he has maintained to the present time. When so many farmers worried about crops unharvested due to soft ground and snow cover, he is unperturbed at the amount of stooks unthreshed, as they may be threshed in the spring with little loss of grade or yield.



August and Peggy have one son, Coleman, married to Patricia Turl. They have two children, Shannon and David. Coleman is the manager of a Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Victoria, B.C.

#### WILLIAM GREIG — by Norman Greig

Mr. and Mrs. William Greig moved from Chilliwack B.C. to the Hinton Trail district in 1918. Halcourt was their post office in those days. They lived on the lot across the Red Willow hill and later sold part of their property to the municipality, to become the Halcourt picnic grounds.

William was a carpenter, and it was while he was working at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm in 1924, that he passed away.

Mrs. Greig remained on the Experimental Farm in charge of the boarding house until 1926. The Greigs then moved to Northporte, Washington, where they lived for a year before moving to New Westminster B.C., to live with Mr. Greig's brother, John Gordon.

In 1935 Mrs. Greig passed away. Martha married Stan Dickson. They have one daughter Janice, married to Mr. Varga of Sydney B.C.

Gordon married Gladys Oddy in 1938. They had one son Norman. Gladys still lives at New Westminster. Norman is married and teaches school at Taylor B.C.

#### IVOR GUEST

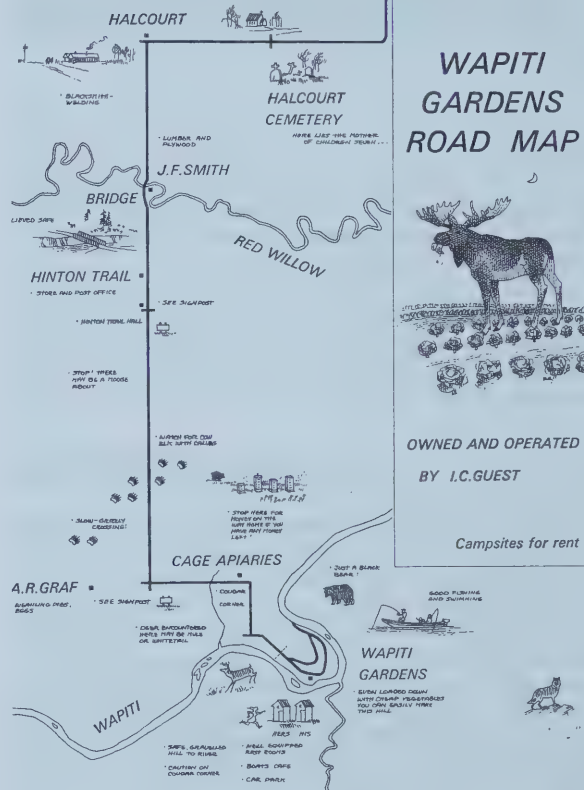
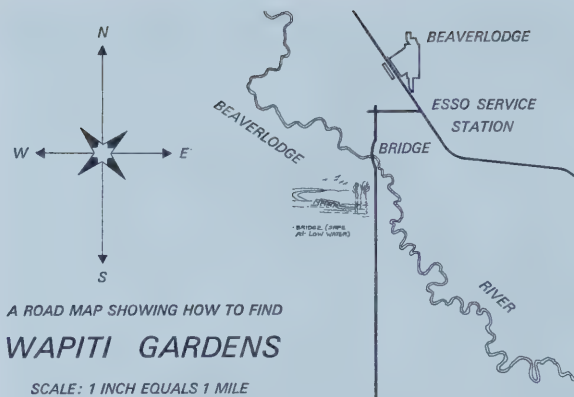
Ivor Guest came to Beaverlodge in May, 1929 from his native England, where after leaving school he worked as a clerk with Lloyds Bank of London. His father had been manager for many years of the Bank's head office branch in Birmingham. Ivor resigned in 1927 and joined the R.A.F. and underwent pilot training. He left the R.A.F. in 1929 and came to Beaverlodge, worked on the farm of R. C. Robson of the Hythe district. Later he went into partnership with Godfrey Barnsley, also from England and farmed a half section of land, now the Basil Peace farm.

Ivor was enthusiastic about the prospects of sheep farming and purchased from Mrs. Paul Brown the "Chase Place", now known as the "Wapiti Gardens." He also homesteaded the adjoining quarter section to the west plus a fraction, considering it to be a good proposition for sheep raising. He subsequently purchased a flock of 60-70 ewes from Allan Watts of Pipestone Creek.

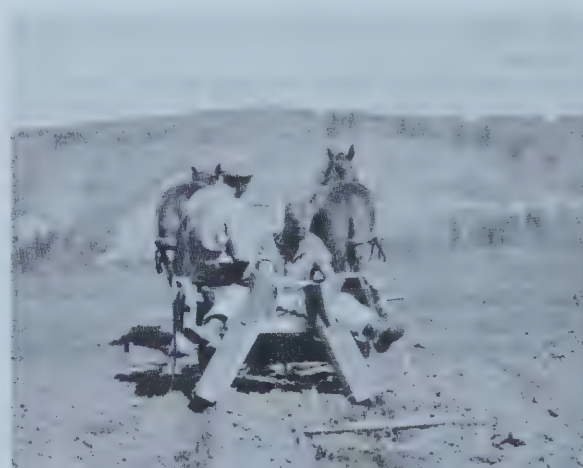
In recent years Ivor yielded to the pressure of outdoor enthusiasts from Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie by staking riverside lots on which they might build cabins. The response has been excellent and Ivor maintains a strict standard of behavior. It is always a pleasure to go to the Wapiti Gardens, whether to visit friends, to fish, or to lay in a stock of vegetables and fruit.

Ivor has a daughter, Mrs. Jill Hill of High Prairie and two sons, Edward and Peter. Edward is married to Dorothy Tenborg of Fort St. John where he is engaged in lumbering. Peter is married to Marie Fisher of High Prairie and is farming near the Wapiti.

Ivor has achieved fame in his various pursuits, not the least of which is his creation of the "Early Tundra" banana. Surely this is another "first" for the Peace and it would be possible only at Wapiti Gardens!



Ivor Guest's improvised potato planter, used on a 4.5 acre patch 1930.



Don McDonald has proudly displayed it at the I.G.A. store and Ivor is not too modest to talk about it. It was pronounced a genuine breakthrough in the field of horticulture by an eminent scientist. Like many others the scientist came to scoff and remained to pray!

#### ROBERT C. GUEST

Robert Guest was born at Beaverlodge, Alberta in 1938. He attended country schools before moving to Beaverlodge for high school. From there he received scholarships to attend the Banff School of Fine Arts in 1956 and 1957 and later enrolled at the Alberta College of Art in Calgary for a four-year period, graduating in Fine Arts in 1963.

By 1973 he had spent nine seasons stationed on fire lookout towers working for the Department of Lands and Forests in the Peace River country. The "great outdoors" made a lasting impression and most of his artwork indicates a love for wilderness and wildlife. He recently succeeded in founding two societies — Canadian Wolf Defenders, which is somewhat international, and Wild Kakwa, the first conservation society of the Peace River country.

Robert worked for three years as a display artist at the Provincial Museum in Edmonton. He has taught extension classes at N.A.I.T., the University of Alberta, Grande Prairie Regional College, Fairview Agricultural College and children's classes at the Edmonton Art Gallery. His drawings and paintings have been represented in numerous exhibitions and are in many private collections throughout North America. Pen drawings have become some of his best known work.

In 1968 he won membership in the Alberta Society of Artists and in 1973 was appointed as one of the nine founding members of The Alberta Art Foundation which was established by the Provincial Government.

At present Robert is attending the University of Alberta, majoring in Fine Art Education. He is married to Myrtle McNeill of Belfast, on staff at the Provincial Archives. They have a daughter, Moya.

#### WILFRED GUEST — By Robert Guest

In 1932 my father, Wilfred arrived to join my uncle, Ivor Guest, in his farming venture. He had terminated a three-year contract with the Bank of London and South America in their branch at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as a telegraphic communications cipher clerk. Upon separation, he worked for a short period in the St. John del Rey diamond mines in the Brazilian interior, State of Minas Geraes. Dad returned to England in February, 1932 and sailed for Canada the next month. He subsequently bought the "Sanderson Place", S.E. 20-69-10-W6. In April 1956 he applied for and obtained employment at the Experimental Farm at Beaverlodge, where he worked until retirement in May, 1973.

Dad married Grace Brown of Rio Grande. They have three sons, Barry, Robert and Phillip, and two daughters, Mrs. Margaret Reddy and Mrs. Colleen Turcotte, both of Victoria, British Columbia. My parents live in Beaverlodge and dad and I, in partnership, still retain a small holding on the banks of the Wapiti River.

I love to sit beside my cabin door  
At break of day. I drink the Sun-God's wine  
And speculate on those who came before  
To make this country theirs and yours and mine.

I conjure up the vision in my mind  
Of oxen teams and rivers swift in spate -  
Of hardy, daring men who left behind  
Their cares and discontent to challenge Fate.

By Beaverlodge some filed their rightful claims,  
The fertile land was plowed and crops were grown  
One here, one there, all honour to their names,  
But seeds of friendship too were firmly sown.

Now friendship is a perishable thing  
And like the wheat may wilt or freeze and die  
Or like some fickle butterfly, take wing -  
Must we not first the Golden Rule apply?

Behind their effort half a century lies,  
Replaced by handsome homes those old log shacks  
The sun shines just as bright, as blue the skies,  
The rivers follow still their timeless tracks.

The summer nights are just as cool and pure,  
The ageless Rocky Mountains watch and brood.  
Could those brave pioneers who "went before"  
But see it now I'm sure they'd say "tis GOOD."

Wilfred Guest



A Bennett Buggy, deluxe model. Ivor and Wilfrid Guest, 1933.

#### GUNDERSON

A man by the name of Gunderson is generally referred to as "The Hermit". He lived alone in the foothills and when he came to the Rio Grande store for supplies he remained outside. When he met a party on the trail he is said to have circled them rather than meet them face on. His cabin at Two Lakes was clean and he was pleased to let others use it, while he slept and ate elsewhere.

Gunderson had several cabins but the one on Gunderson Creek attracted attention as he had a good garden there and the grounds around the cabin were planted with flowers. He was well versed in herbs and thus may have had a history of pharmacy practice. He is reported to have been an American citizen.

Gunderson was in the area in the late '30's and when hunting activities were on the increase, he is reported to have moved on to the Fort Nelson area.

#### CHARLIE GUSNYCK

Charlie Gusnyck came from the United States in



1925 to live in Hinton Trail on land near the road to the Wapiti Gardens. He was a bachelor and homesteaded next to John and Bill "Archie" Yarchack. His only known relatives were two sisters in the U.S.A.

He and his partner Pete Peterson were widely known as many people employed them to put "Russian plaster" on their walls and ceilings. This was a mixture of clay, chopped straw and sometimes other fibre. It was often tramped with bare feet in a large washtub to the right consistency for plastering.

In depression years when cash was very short, it made a thick, durable, pleasing and cheap finish to the inside of any home. It was also more resistant to the cold than hardwall plaster.

Charlie always had a very good strawberry patch. To travel when roads were suitable he used a bicycle.

Charlie was taken ill and died suddenly at home.

### ARTHUR HALL

Arthur Hall served in the Royal Canadian Artillery during World War I and saw active service in France. He often mentioned young men that he knew, who never returned, but he also grieved for the countless beautiful horses left to die on the battlefield.

On his return to Canada he wandered through the South Peace in search of a homestead and a trap line. He chose land near the forks of the Red Willow and Wapiti west of the McGinness Flats. Here he enjoyed a large garden where he grew marrows, cucumbers, corn, potatoes and other vegetables. He sold some produce in Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie but most of it he shared with his many friends who visited him.

His trap line was south of the river. Once he brought out 5 timber wolf hides, the largest of which measured over 8 feet from tip to tip.

Other settlers with families moved into the Wapiti area. Little did they know of the hardships they might be called upon to endure. One night a knock was heard on Art's door. It was Ed Brown who homesteaded west of Art Hall's place. He was seeking help to get his little son to hospital. They surmised that it was an attack of appendicitis. Art harnessed his team of dogs and prepared his toboggan with warm blankets. The child was carefully loaded and the five huskies, led by "Brownie," slid down the Wapiti banks and raced to the Grande Prairie hospital where surgery was performed.

When World War II was declared, Art joined the Veteran Guard of Canada and as a guard was sent to various prison camps in Canada. He received many souvenirs such as sailing boats in bottles and beautiful carvings. These he passed on to his little friends when he came home on leave.

After World War II Art received a small pension which enabled him to improve his cabin and build a little barn for "Black Bessie", his quarter horse. During the blueberry season friends from Beaverlodge, Hazelmere, Halcourt and Hinton Trail camped in tents along the grassy banks of Art's crystal clear spring. At night large campfires were built and everyone sat around on logs listening to tall tales and singing old familiar songs. Some of the men who were not interested in picking blueberries kept the camp supplied

with trout and grayling. Thrilling stories of stag parties that lasted several days could be related but these are better left untold.

Art was visiting in Two Rivers when he heard that a little four year old boy was lost in the bush near a lake. He joined in the search. Before dark, Art's dog, Brownie, was seen coming down a bush trail with the little boy hanging tightly to its collar. The little boy was Dalton Longson.

Time makes many changes but the death of Art Hall was a loss to his many friends. He was buried on October 16, 1954 in the Halcourt cemetery. A Legion tombstone and an Elk shield mark the grave of this colorful pioneer.

### PERCY HASTINGS

Percy Hastings was an Ontario man and came to Saskatchewan in the early twenties on a harvest excursion. He had left his ailing mother in charge of a nurse, Sarah Hubbert but was called back when his mother passed on. He later returned to Saskatchewan and took up a homestead at Kinkaid.

During this time Percy and Sarah kept in touch and on his return in 1925 they were married and went to live in Vancouver where Perc worked as a carpenter, and also in the draying business.

In 1930 they came to the Hinton Trail district taking over the land formerly owned by Kenneth Ronksley. Later he bought a quarter to the west, which had been homesteaded by Wm. Phipps.



Mr. and Mrs. Percy Hastings and baby Norriene, 1939.



Perc and Sarah built up a nice farmstead and grew some good crops of oats, barley and clovers. They had one girl, Norriene. She took her schooling at Hinton Trail and Beaverlodge. She married George Bateman, a United States man and they left to make their home in the U.S. They have two boys.

Sometime later tragedy struck the young family. When George was on a hunting trip in the Monkman Pass area he succumbed to a heart attack. Norriene then set about to upgrade her education in order to make a living for her family and expects to graduate this summer as an ex-ray technician.

Perc and Sarah spent 25 years on their farm at Hinton Trail. They left in 1955 to live in Beaverlodge when Perc felt his health was not good enough to stand the ups and downs of farm life. He passed on in 1958.

Many of us wish to remember Sarah for her kind response in time of sickness, when doctors were hard to get. She now enjoys a nice quiet life in the Senior Citizens' Apartments in Beaverlodge.



Meal time at the Percy Hastings farm.

### THE HAVEN SCHOOL

With the help of volunteer labor, logs and material donated by the settlers plus a \$150 government grant the Haven School was built four miles south of the Hinton Trail corner. School was opened in November 1937 with Miss Josephine Price of Stony Plain the first teacher. The original students included: Richard Mosley, Hazel Birch, Betty Barratt, Isaac, Henry, Grace and Elsie Buller, Jim and Tom Brown, Stella Sask, Jorma and Elli Bakka and Everet Glen. The population grew with the coming of Bernice and Opal

Howatt, and Joe, Sandy, Pete and Jean Smith in the following two years. A peak enrolment of more than 30 was reached with the attendance through the years by the children of the William Metcalfs, the Robert Howatts, the William Howatts, the Sam Unruhs, the Wilfred Guests, the Ivor Guests, the Len Joneses, the Arthur Mounces, the Fletcher Smiths, the Jan Sawchuks, the Tom Kulickis, the John Sylvaniuks, the Steve Kalischuks, the Mel Gundersons and the Hugh D'Aousts. Also to come later were Minnie Sask, Victor Donison, William Jarczyk, Coleman Graf, Jim Barratt and Frances Young.

Through the years the teaching staff included Miss Josephine Price, Mrs. Robert Parks, Mrs. Gordon Moyer, Miss Ann Pycrz, Miss Evelyn Rieger, Mrs. Arthur Mounce, Miss Kathleen Burgess, Ronald Quinn and Miss Dinah White. During years of teacher shortage there were correspondence supervisors, Miss Doris McNeil, Miss Joan Dahl, Miss Edna Dupuis, and Miss Jean Stringer.

### HINTON TRAIL COMMUNITY CLUB — by Evelyn Moss

In the late thirties the Craigellachie District was quite well settled, with a large enrolment of children at the school. It was then it became evident for the need of a community club to look after the growing demands of the district.

In 1939 a meeting was called to discuss the feasibility of forming a ladies' club, and out of it emerged what was called "Craigellachie Community Club," or the C.C.C.

A president and secretary-treasurer were elected for a three year term and committees were appointed, one to act on behalf of the district and the other for Church needs. We met once a month at the school. We all looked forward to it and a chance to chat with neighbors over a cup of tea. Funds were raised by putting on dances, card parties, tea and bazaars, raffles etc.

One of the big events of the year was the children's Christmas concert and tree, which was usually followed by a dance. The children all received candy treats and a small gift and apples were passed among the crowd.



Haven School.





# Hinton Trail Pioneers

CANADA CENTENNIAL · 1967

## First Homesteaders

James McGovern · Dec. 9, 1914 · S.W. 19-17-10W6  
Wm. Thompson · March 7, 1916 · S.W. 13-70-11-6  
Wm. Scorgie · April 26, 1916 · N.E. 18-70-10  
G. Moir · 1916 · S.W. 18-70-10  
A. D. McEachern · 1917 · S.E. 18-70-10  
R. W. Beatty · 1917 · N.W. 8-70-10  
C. S. Spence · 1917 · N.W. 17-70-10  
Holborn · 1917 · N.E. 17-70-10

First Bridge · On Red Willow River · Winter 1917-18

## First Weddings

Fred Holborn and Gladys Spence · July 1917  
Wm. Scorgie and Violet McEachern · Jan. 1918  
Rev. A. Forbes

## First Children Born to District

Floyd Holborn · 1918  
Norma Spence · Born at Halcourt · 1918  
Ellen Scorgie · Born at Home · 1918  
Harold Spence · Born at Home · 1919  
Rena Holborn · Born at her Grandmother's in 1920

School District Formed · May 5, 1921 · No. 4035  
Closed · 1949

Name chosen by Wm. Greig · Craigellachie  
Built in 1922 · Opened in January 1923  
First Teacher · Mrs. Haddock

First School Board · Chairman D. A. McEachern  
Secretary Wm. Greig and Tiny Metcalfe

Post Office · Hinton Trail · August 15, 1923

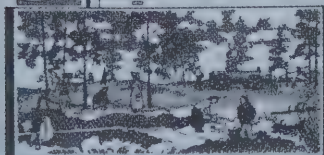
First Postmasters · Stan Ronksley · 1923-1936  
C. S. Spence and Family · 1936-1961

First Store · Mel Sutton · 1930

First District Nurse · Miss O'Neill · 1919

The District was served by a travelling Minister

© R. C. GUEST



Hinton Trail Pioneers. A scroll by Robert Guest, hung in the Hinton Trail hall, 1965.





Building the Hinton Trail Hall, 1947. Standing top row: Bill Smith, Dave Dunbar, Len Scorgie, August Graf, George Ingledew, Dave Thompson. Seated L-R: Art Mounce, Alec Dunbar, Bill Connell, Verne Scorgie, Frank Cage, Bill Thompson, Bob Dunbar, Ian McEachern, Charlie Augustinik, Spurgeon Spence. Kneeling: Bob Ingledew, Bill Scorgie.

The Red Cross committee made their annual drive for funds and Christmas boxes were filled with home cooking and candy for the soldiers who went from the district, some knitting was done also.

The Church committee carried on for a while, but due to three different denominations in the district and limited means of raising funds we decided to discontinue this effort after three or four years.

Our Red Cross work was carried on until the end of the war, when everything was brought under one committee.

During the winter months the members were busy making quilt blocks and sewing for the annual bazaar which is put on during May in conjunction with a tea. Materials for this work were usually purchased from mid-winter sale catalogues.

In 1948 the schools south of the Red Willow river were centralized at Elmworth, and Craigellachie school ceased to operate. It was sold later with the land on which it was located. The monthly meetings were then held in the homes, each member taking a turn at hosting the meeting. The larger gatherings were held at the Hinton Trail hall which had been recently built. It was then we became the Hinton Trail Community Club.

During the coming years we found ourselves involved in many different things. A school fair was in operation for a number of years, and every spring saw the school track meet and the need for play ground equipment.

The new hall needed paint and other renovations as it became very popular, even with groups from outside the district. In the mid-sixties the Community Club took over the operation of the hall, only to find a short time later that the joists under the floor had rotted due to so much wet weather, which made it unsafe for large gatherings.

The club began a number of fund raising projects to correct the situation and in 1972 it received a grant under the winter Works Incentive Program to restore the building, the grant being directed to labor alone, the Community Club paying for the cost of materials. The hall is back in operation with additional improvements, and sponsoring such activities as a Dine and Dance and other large gatherings.

There are not many of the original members left, but others have come to take their place and according to our newspaper correspondent from Hinton Trail the club is still well attended and very much a part of the district in its 33rd year.

#### THE HARRY INGLEDEWS — by Joyce Ingledew

Harry Ingledew, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ingledew, came out to his uncle's farm at Palmer, Saskatchewan in 1922 and the family followed a year later. Then the family rented and farmed a section of land until 1928, when they moved to the Peace River country. They felt that land in Saskatchewan was getting too dear to buy and thought that there would be more opportunity to acquire some here.

On the way they had the harrowing experience of losing their youngest brother Bill but they never forgot the kindness of close neighbors at that time, something that was typical of homesteaders of that day, and still is I think.

The Ingledews bought Jim McGovern's half-section and Bob Beatty's three quarters of land and each of the boys and their dad filed on homesteads, later releasing three of them which were lake areas.

The two girls, Doris (Cage) and Martha (Dunbar) attended Craigellachie school. Eventually all married except Bob and settled in the district.

On a Sunday evening at the old home as many as 20 families and neighbors would gather around the table for supper and on New Year's night a party was held where everyone was welcome and there have been as many as 80 or 100 people come to celebrate and dance the hours away.

Joyce Hunkin and Harry were married in August 1939. They have always been very community minded, assisting socially, education-wise, or building a new hall or church. Their farming indicated progressiveness as new crops came into use in the district such as alsike and sweet clover.

They have four children. David is a graduate in Agriculture, associated with the Ontario Seed Company. He married Leslie Scott; they have two children. They live in Edmonton as does Mary who married Heintz Vitovec. Jessie, very active in 4-H during high school, is a nurse, married to Brian Scott. and has a boy. Patsy, a graduate in Home Economics served with C.U.S.O. in Africa, married Robert Cunningham. They live in Ontario.

#### BOB INGLEDEW

Bob Ingledew lived on the farm with his parents, the Robert Ingledews. After they died he retained the farm. He was very sports minded, full of fun and loved to dance. After the hall was built in 1947 he organized badminton in the district and paid special attention to the youngsters so that they could play badminton. Several times he took them to tournaments at Dawson Creek or Prince George, B.C. and they returned, winners of the junior boys' and girls' events. It never cost the kids a nickel to play as Bob provided the birds and kept the rackets in good order. He was just as enthusiastic about softball or any other game. He used to keep a mouth organ in his pocket and would whip it out and play a tune when he thought things were get-



ting a little dull. He was always ready to help with any project that was started in the district especially if it was going to benefit the youngsters. Bob died in May, 1968 at the age of 63.

A family presentation of a planter was made to the Beaverlodge hospital in memory of Bob.

#### **THE ROBERT INGLEDREW FAMILY — by M. Dunbar**

On April 1923, Good Friday, Robert Ingledew with his wife, Louise, sons Bob, George and Bill, daughters Doris and Martha sailed from Liverpool to go to that Wild West country, "Canada". He decided to go to Canada as he was finding it rather difficult to make a living for his family on the 17 shillings a week he was making as a Tip man at the iron ore mine in Eston, Yorkshire. Annie, the eldest in the family had just married in February so she decided to stay in England. The year before Harry, the eldest son, had sailed to Canada and was working for his uncle Bob Mitchell at Palmer, Saskatchewan. Dad's close friend, Jim Beasley, who also had a large family and was having difficulties making ends meet, had decided to emigrate but he chose Australia for his destination. Dad was uncertain for awhile whether he should try Australia or go to Canada, however, with Harry already settled in Canada, he thought it would be best to go there.

We arrived at Halifax after a lovely voyage on the good ship Andania. We ran into trouble in Halifax when we went into the Immigration Hall. The authorities decided that perhaps they should send dad back to England on account of a slight form of palsy, thinking that perhaps he would not be able to support his family in this country. So we sat in that Immigration Hall and wondered what would happen to us if they sent dad back, as we had no money to return and we did not want to be separated. However they decided to let us go as we were going to an uncle in Saskatchewan. We boarded the train and travelled to Palmer where Uncle Bob and Harry met us.

The first year at Palmer we lived in a six-room house on a section of land, three miles from uncle. The land owner gave us an old horse that had been put out to pasture. Later we bought an old buggy. Now we could drive the three miles to school instead of walking as we had for the first couple of months. Dad found a job mostly painting, and doing minor repairs about 15 miles from home. He was paid \$15 a month and he walked home each Saturday and back on Sunday. Bob and George got work on farms not too far away and had a bit of difficulty getting used to horses. For the next five summers we farmed the section we were living on and did very well. In the winter of '24-'25 Harry went back to England for a holiday. In the winter of '25-'26 Bob and George went back. Dad went back the winter of '26-'27 and mother went back the winter of '27-'28.

In the summer of '28, the landlord sold the farm, so we knew we would have to move. Having heard such glowing reports about the Peace River country the boys, Harry, Bob and George drove to Edmonton and boarded the train for Grande Prairie. Here they hired a guide by the name of "Wapiti Brown" to show them

around. He took them out to the Halcourt-Hinton Trail area. They were very impressed with the country and decided to give it a try, so they put a payment on the Jim McGovern farm, a half section on top of the Red Willow hill — S.W. 19-70-10 and the S.E. 24-70-11. They also bought three quarters from Bob Beatty who lived in the same area. They filed on four homestead quarters to the south, one for dad by proxy. Later they let all the quarters go except the one they had homesteaded for dad. They found they had filed on the wrong places as they were in the lake area and were not the ones that they had looked at before they filed.

In the fall of 1928 after we finished the harvesting, Mother, George, Bill, Doris and myself left by car to come to Peace River. The others stayed behind to sell the things we were not taking, and to bring the stock and equipment we would need by settler's car.

After we left Medicine Hat we had the misfortune to run into a snow storm; the car got stuck and we were thoroughly chilled. Bill became sick and died just after we reached Calgary, a bad beginning for our new venture. We left Bill's body in Calgary and went by rail to Wembley, the end of steel at that time. Dad was with us now, having come to Calgary when Bill died.

We stayed at the hotel at Wembley, as Jim McGovern and Bob Beatty were still on their places, and did not move till three weeks after we arrived. Staying in the hotel was very wearisome. One day a couple came to the hotel and said that they were our neighbors. They took us back with them and we stayed at their place until we could move onto our own farm. These wonderful people were the Alex Thompsons, the best of neighbors. By this time the three boys had arrived at Wembley with all our stuff. The men folk lived in the old blacksmith shop until Mr. McGovern had his sale. We buried Bill in the Halcourt cemetery November fifth. The people were very good to us and did all they could to make this time easier for us. This is something a person does not forget in a hurry.

We had brought in 20 head of horses, a tractor, separator and all the necessary farm equipment we needed. The Jim McGovern place became our home. The house was a three-room log shack without a window in one of the rooms. There was not enough room for us all so the three boys had to sleep in the blacksmith shop that first winter, and of a morning you would see them racing for the house, half dressed and half frozen. In the summer they bought the old store that had belonged to Gaudins in the old town. They tore it down, and built an addition on the log house, which consisted of another big room downstairs, and three bedrooms upstairs. They made one big room of the log house. They put in a cement cistern in the cellar and we caught the rain off the roof for washing and bathing. Drinking water was hauled from the Red Willow river, just below the house, and was put into a well we had dug. We always had lots of hot water, as we heated it from the kitchen range, and pumped the water by hand from the cellar into the hot water heater at the back of the stove.

The boys and dad cleared a lot of land those first two years. The depression years came along and it was tough going to meet the payments on the places. Wheat was selling for as low as 20 cents a bushel one year,



cows \$10 to \$15, eggs 3 cents a dozen, but still with all the hard times it was fun too. In the winter they would haul the grain into town, and you could go out on a frosty winter morning and hear the sleigh runners grinding on the frosty snow, the chains rattling and the sleigh bells ringing as the neighbors and men from the Elmworth and Hinton Trail areas were away with their loads of grain. Cutting firewood was another occupation that kept them busy in the winter. Come spring they would have a bee at the various farms and the men would go from one place to another to help saw the fire wood, and of course there was always a good meal waiting for them when they had finished.

Winter wasn't all work in those days. We used to visit around and play cards. Fridays, there was generally a dance or a house party somewhere and often someone would take a "four-up" on a grain tank and would go around and collect a load of people. We would then head down to the Sanderson place, or the Elliott home on the Wapiti, there we would go tobogganing for awhile, and end up dancing till breakfast time, then load up again and away home. Summer time the old Halcourt Picnic grounds came into its own. People for miles would gather there. Some Sundays we would have an open air church service and a picnic afterwards. They would either swim or play ball, the older men would pitch horse shoes. We always had a lot of folks come visit us on a Sunday, and often we would set the supper table for 20 or 30 people.

Dad did not do too much of the actual farming but always stooked, and pitched bundles at harvest time. His main job was the chores, and he always had a good garden. Harry was the trader of the family and it was his great delight to try and get a good bargain. Bob was very sports minded and liked to play any game that was going. When they first came to this country Harry, George and Bob played soccer for the Grande Prairie team.

Times were hard in the 30's and the lowly flour sack really came into its own. We made everything from them, dresses, pillow cases, sheets, tea towels and even underwear. You were lucky if you had one good pair of shoes on your feet. I can remember one time when dad just simply had to have a new pair of overalls, the old ones could be patched no more. When the new pair was bought it was my job to shorten them, and how I hated sewing. I sat down and cut off one leg, and sewed the bottom up, feeling quite smug. I cut the second leg and sewed it up, stood up and shook the pants out. To my dismay, I found I had cut the same leg twice, so I had to turn around and stitch the cuffs back onto the short leg. After all father couldn't go around with one leg up to the knee and the other one trailing the floor. I can tell you I was not very popular that day.

When the war broke out in September, 1939 the three boys went to Grande Prairie and tried to enlist but were turned down. By this time they had acquired another quarter of land next to the Beatty half. Harry made his home on the Beatty half and George on the newly purchased quarter across the road. Bob lived on the home place with dad and mother. During the war years, I lived there after my marriage to Bob Dunbar

in 1940, with our little girl Jean who was born in '41, till Bob came back from overseas in 1945.

Dad died in the early part of 1947 at 78. He stooked and worked almost to the day he died. Mother died in April 1958 at the age of 84. Bob died in May 1968 at the age of 63. All in all, it was a good life; the family helped in all the districts projects and it seemed as if the community as a whole got along and worked together very well.

One thing I forgot to mention about the 30's was that no one could afford to run a car very much so we used to buy a license for it when it was harvest time so that we could get to town more quickly for repairs. Most of the cars in those days were made into Bennett buggies and the horse was the locomotion. We grew some good crops and did not need fertilizer to do it. In the early 40's they started to grow sweet clover to build up the soil, then they grew alsike clover. Then came fescue but they had to fertilize the grasses. In the 30's they grew a lot of Garnet wheat and in the 50's mostly barley.

Harry married Joyce Hunkin, August, 1939, a girl from Guernsey who was visiting her brother, Percy Hunkin of Halcourt. They now live at Parksville, B.C. They have four children; David married Leslie Scott and there are two children. They live in Edmonton as does Mary and her husband Heintz Vitovec. Jessie married Brian Scott and they have one son. They live in Ontario and also Patsy and her husband, Robert Cunningham.

George married Sadie Metcalf in October, 1941. Now they live at Kelowna. There are four children. Louise is married to Jim Frame and lives at Elmworth. They have three daughters. Tommy works for A.G.T. at High Level. Gordon with his wife, Edna Lofstrom and daughter live in Grande Prairie. Bob works at the mill in Grande Prairie.

Doris married Frank Cage in 1931. They had a family of eight, four boys and four girls. They are referred to in detail in the Cage story. Jim is unmarried and lives at home with his mother.

Bob and I live at Hinton Trail and have three children. Jean is married to Roy Quinn of Elmworth and they have three children. Bill married Marcella Sbitney and they are in Prince George where he works for the Forestry. Rod works for A.G.T. in Grande Prairie.

## LAVERNE JONES

Joseph Laverne Jones was born in Lindsay, Ontario. His parents were of Irish descent and they had a family of eight. Laverne and an older brother farmed at Sanctuary, Saskatchewan for a few years and then with another brother, Leonard, came to the Hinton Trail district. There it was rather axiomatic that Laverne would be called Ben, so that was the name he was known by locally. The trip in was a bit of a lark, marred only by the mischance of Len seemingly mislaying his wallet in Edmonton. A frantic search failed to find it but Ben had a few dollars so they came on. The wallet had been found by Ben and it came to light shortly after their arrival on the homestead, to the delight of several of the new cronies who had been let in on the secret.





Crossing the Wapiti river with a load of wild meat. 1938.

Ben married Bertha Wilson, a registered nurse from Fenelon Falls and who became the mainstay of the neighborhood sick. There was one son, Laverne of Beaverlodge, married to Joan Chambers.

#### LEONARD JONES AND FAMILY

Leonard (Len) was born in 1899 and grew up at Lindsay, Ontario coming to the west in 1920.

He and his brother Laverne (Ben) came to the Hinton Trail district, each filing on a homestead. The following spring Leonard's homestead was covered with water so he abandoned it and filed again on higher ground.

It was to this homestead he brought his bride, the former Margaret Moore of Gilbert Plains, Manitoba born in 1907. Leonard and his brother worked together farming for several years.

Leonard purchased a Model T Ford car around 1923, the first car south of the Red Willow river. There were problems in wet weather as the hills were quite steep.

Leonard later made what was called a Bennett buggy from the running gear of his old Ford and used it for many years.

In 1929 he filed on a second homestead down in what was later named Rivers Vale, east of Hinton Trail. From then on it was a continual move from one homestead to the other to prove them both up.

In 1949 the family moved to the Albright district where they operated a general store and elevator until 1954. They moved to Beaverlodge when they sold the store to a nephew, George Wilkie. Leonard went to work at the Experimental Station where he worked with the stock until his health gave out. Then they moved to Grande Prairie and operated a boarding house for some time. Leonard retired in 1964. He passed away very suddenly in 1969 from a heart attack while on a hunting trip with his youngest son Tom.

The Jones family consists of four sons and seven daughters who are scattered now and all married.

Honey bee pollination in a field of alsike clover.







Len Jones' car, the first car south of the Red Willow, 1919.

William married Mary Ann Dyrkach and farms south of Beaverlodge. Gilbert is in business in Washington, U.S.A. Lyle and Tom both reside in Grande Prairie where Lyle is manager of Grimshaw Trucking and Tom is a carpenter. The oldest daughter Alicia lives in Edmonton. Irene lives in Ontario. Rita lives in Whitehorse, N.W.T. Verna lives in Vegreville and married a farmer. Laura and Joyce both live in Manitoba. Ruth resides in Fort Nelson, B.C.

Leonard's wife Margaret now resides in the Senior Citizen's Apartments in Grande Prairie.

#### ALEX KARR — by Ian McEachern

Alex Karr came to the Peace River country the spring of 1918 from Chilliwack. His wife Florence, two boys Henry and Albert, and a girl Isabella were accompanied by Mrs. Stan Ronsley and her three small girls. The families came by passenger train while the two men came in with a carload of settlers effects.

Stan had been out to Hinton Trail the summer before and filed on land. My dad knew Stan well as he had been his foreman on his building projects in Chilliwack.

Leaving the women and children in Grande Prairie, the two men came to our place. Stan got stuck in the middle of the Red Willow river and Alex came on to our place about two miles with a single horse on a buggy and leading a Jersey heifer that gave birth to a heifer calf about half an hour later. Meanwhile dad and brother Erwin took our old team, 150 feet of inch rope and a set of pulleys and got Stan out of the river.

When the two men got back to Grande Prairie, Mrs. Ronsley was ill with pneumonia. Two days later she died in the hospital and Mrs. Karr was left to care for

the three girls, Gladys, nine months, Kathleen, four, and Eileen, five.

After they reached our place my mother kept the girls until Stan's mother came. The Karrs and the Ronsleys lived across the road from each other in tents about two miles south of us.

Stan built a house and Alex filed on land near the Red Willow river. This was their home for three and a half years.

Henry Karr was a year younger than me, Isabella a year below him and Albert the youngest at that time. In the fall of 1921 Walter was born and shortly after Alex sold out and went back to Ontario where he had come from originally. He had been in the First World War and had a considerable pension for those days.

The fall of 1929 on a cold muddy day a taxi drove into our yard, Henry got out and paid the man off with his last cent. Of course we took the boy in as one of our own and he helped around until he got a job. Tall and slight at that time, Henry was always a reliably good worker.

In 1930 the rest of the family came back and built on Henry's homestead two miles east on the south side of the road.

Isabella and I were married in the fall of 1930 so we became more than friends with the Karr family. Walter put in five years of war on a subchaser. He came home to get married and was killed in Saskatchewan in a car accident.

Albert is in Murrayville, B.C. and Henry is at Salmon Arm. Johnny, the youngest, is in Edmonton. Alex is long passed away, but mother Karr died only two years ago. They were all wonderful friends and



neighbours and participated in community events with good hearted friendliness.

#### **ALBERT KENNEDY — by Lily Kennedy**

Albert Kennedy was born in Kansas and came to Canada in the spring of 1907 with several of his cousins, the Duffys. They landed near Lacombe and stayed there for a few years, working for farmers in the Pleasant Valley area. Albert and I met at a house party and became acquainted.

Albert's folks lived near St. Paul, Kansas, and the church he attended still stands. It is one hundred years old and built of rock.

My dad and mother came from England around 1892 and settled in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where I was born. They then moved to Lacombe and homesteaded about 20 miles from town. I learned my 3 R's at a little country school named North Star.

Albert and I were married at Lacombe in 1911, and later moved to Delburne, and farmed there until March, 1928. Our next move was to the Peace River country, settling on a homestead at Hinton Trail, where we worked like — to make a living. Albert got on as Road Councillor to help out, and in the fall went out threshing. We milked quite a few cows and fed lots of hogs. We built all our own buildings.

Albert died of a heart attack in the fall of 1948. I left the next spring, and settled in Grande Prairie for the next ten years. I then went to St. Paul, Kansas, in 1966 to be close to Tom, my son, and his family. I am very happy here but often think back to our twenty years on a homestead at Hinton Trail and all the nice people that lived there.

I could go on and on. How we chased cows along the Wapiti banks. We did have fun at our school house dances.

#### **ADOLF KOPPEL**

I filed on a homestead on March 10th, 1918, the N.E. 6-69-10 in Hinton Trail, built a shack on it and started at once to clear the land. I worked for three months clearing the land then went to the Prairies for the harvest.

I returned in March with three horses, a cow, some implements and other necessities I needed for the homestead. I landed in Grande Prairie eight days after I left Edmonton. It was 60 below zero, but the next day it warmed up so I started for the homestead. There was no snow on the ground.

In 1919 I broke eight acres and seeded it to oats. In 1920 I broke another 15 acres and seeded that to oats. I received my citizenship papers on March 18, 1923 and the patent to the homestead soon after. I bought a binder in 1922, the first in the district. That year I used it to cut my own crop and that of Ed Barrett.

In 1936 Freda and I were married. She was a girl from my native Switzerland. We were blessed with three children, Alma, Albert and Hester.

In 1947 we moved to establish a ten acre dairy farm near Victoria. Land values rose, so it seemed a good time to retire. We now reside in a comfortable house in Victoria. I am an enthusiastic coin and stamp collector.

#### **THE GEORGE LOCK FAMILY**

George W. Lock was born in Thursley, England in

1875 and lived there until he was 24. In 1899 he enlisted in the British Army. He fought in the Boer War and after his discharge he emigrated to Canada in 1904.

He lived in Ontario for a few years and there met Miss Bertha Rowe of Tottenham, Ontario. They were married in 1909 in Estevan, Saskatchewan where George was working as a coal miner. In 1911 they moved to Ladysmith, Vancouver Island where he continued to work as a miner.

In 1914 World War I was declared and George joined the forces, was trained at Vernon and served overseas in the Canadian Light Infantry Division. During this time Bertha lived in Victoria. After the war he made his way north to the Peace River country with his wife and three children, James, Lawrence and Lorna. After moving around considerably in this area they finally settled on a homestead in Hinton Trail in 1925. There were another three children born, Howard, Ellen and Ethel. During these years times were hard and George worked as a miner and trapper and did some farming in his spare time to help keep his family fed and clothed. The Craigellachie School was four and one-half miles from home and it was a long hike for the children.

Bertha suffered for several years from a leg ulcer and died in 1932 at an early age. George was thus left with the sorrow of losing his wife and the task of learning to raise five young children from the ages of four to 15. His eldest son, James soon started fending for himself and went to work on a farm. More sorrow hit the family in 1935 when Ellen died of acute appendicitis due to the great distance to go for medical treatment, in Grande Prairie.

A few years later Lorna was married to Henry McKay and made their home on a farm in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. They had five children. Later Henry died and Lorna moved back to Beaverlodge and remarried.

Ethel married during the war to James Oliver of Portage la Prairie. They remained there on a farm where they raised their three children. James is now deceased and Ethel still lives in Manitoba.

James Lock married Mary Tissington of Grande Prairie in 1945. They lived on a farm at Hinton Trail for some years and later moved to Beaverlodge where Jim got a job at the Experimental Farm. They have raised a family of eight children.

Lawrence was married to Margaret Forrest in Edinburgh, Scotland during the war in 1945. Lawrence came back to Canada when the war ended and Margaret arrived a few months later. They took up farming at Halcourt for several years and later moved to Beaverlodge where Lawrence also started work at the Experimental Farm. They have raised five children. They moved to Lacombe Research Station in 1971, where Larry is the farm foreman.

Howard Lock was married to Jane Forrest of Edinburgh, Scotland in November, 1945. Howard returned from army service in March of 1946, and started work at the Experimental Farm. Jane arrived in Canada in August, 1946. They have three girls.

In the winter of 1950 George Lock died of a heart attack while walking to the Hinton Trail store for groceries.



George and Bertha Lock and baby Jim, 1917.



George Lock (R) in camp at Vernon, B.C., 1916.

### TOM McARTHUR

Tom lived with his wife, Myrtle on the Bickner place near the sand ridges. A log house on the corner of the Beatty place was their home for some years while the children attended Craigellachie school.

With Henry McKay he spent several winters trapping up the Pinto. He took part in the building of the Alaska Highway. Later he had employment as a carpenter in Dawson Creek and moved the family there.

They had five children. Elva Jean is married, living at Boston Bar, B.C. Jim married Jean Harding and they live in Dawson Creek. Edna Mae married Jack Loucks and lives in Rocky Mountain House. Zona is married to Bert Hockey and they live in Grande

Prairie. Glen married Joan Karr and they reside in Salmon Arm.

In 1969 Tom passed away after a lengthy illness, Mrs. McArthur sold the home and moved to Summerland, B.C. to be with her sister. She is remarried and is now Mrs. Hardie Currie.

### THE McEACHERN STORY — by Ian McEarchern

My father came to Grande Prairie from Chilliwack, B.C. in July, 1916. He was accompanied by William Scorgie, later my brother-in-law and Roy Dundas. They all filed on land which later became the Hinton Trail area.

My dad was a big 6-foot Scotsman and an ideal pioneer. Besides being an expert carpenter he had some experience as a blacksmith and a veterinarian.

The summer of 1916 dad and Scorgie built a log house on the latter's quarter. John Finnegan of Halcourt hauled the logs for the house and plowed a fire guard. Ed Sheppard hauled lumber for doors, windows and other needs from Grande Prairie for the cabin.

On May 1, 1917 mother, sister Violet, brother Doug and I landed in Grande Prairie. I was 9 years old. Father and Scorgie arrived two or three days later with a car load of settler's effects. A week later we moved into the Scorgie cabin and on May 14 it snowed four inches. The whole country had been burned off the fall before and only the fire guard had saved the cabin.

We had as neighbours the Spence family who had moved in from Spirit River in February. They had many horses and some cows which had been able to rustle on the unburned river flats as there was little snow.

Spurgeon Spence plowed some garden for us, but potatoes froze down 9 times.

My oldest brothers, Clarence and Erwin worked in Saskatchewan all summer and sent money home. Dad filed on land nearby for them by proxy and they were able to file for themselves that fall.

In January 1918, sister Vi and Bill Scorgie were married. In February we moved into our own log house on dad's place.

During the summer of 1917 and 1918 many people came in to file on land. Dad and Erwin put 42 settlers on land for a fee of \$10.00 each. Gradually we acquired horses, cattle and got more land broken as the country opened up. As there were no doctors or nurses available, in time mother had 42 little ones she had brought into the world as a mid-wife.

For seven years all traffic south went through dad's place from corner to corner. As many as 14 people stayed over night at one time and no one in need was ever turned away. The fall of 1921 I rode 5 miles to school at Halcourt. Mr. Irwin, the teacher, was very good to me and I was able to take 6 grades in two years. Mrs. Edna Moyer was my teacher the next year until Christmas. The summer of 1922 dad was able to organize a school district. Our school opened January 3, 1923 and I went to school there to finish the term.

In 1922 Erwin proved his place up, sold his land and went back to the U.S.A., where he stayed and became a foreman on a bridge building crew. He died in an accident in 1955.



Clarence served overseas in 1918, came home to take up a soldier grant, then left for B.C. in 1923.

In 1927 my brother Doug, age 23 became ill and Dr. Carlisle took him to Grande Prairie hospital for observation. Dr. O'Brien operated on him for a double goitre and he failed to survive the operation. Mother had written to Clarence and asked him to come home on account of Doug's illness so he was with us for the funeral.

By this time dad had a fairly well-equipped blacksmith shop and was doing some work for neighbours as well as our own. I had been able to take over the horseshoeing job the winter before and as the years went on much of the other work as well. During the hungry thirties we repaired sleighs, wagons, mowers and my pal Frank Cage and I even made parts for machinery.

In 1930 I was married to Isabella Karr, a neighbour and we had a rough time raising a family in the hungry thirties.

Mother died in 1935 and father in 1940. Clarence sold out, joined the army and went to High River in southern Alberta. I had filed on land in 1926 and farmed it as well as dad's land.

We raised a family of nine girls and three boys. They are all married and are scattered from Fort St. John to Vancouver Island.

Vi Shail lives in Hythe as we do, Big son Doug, 6 foot two, and 200 pounds, farms on the Emerson Trail about 18 miles away. Alex is a teacher in Edmonton, Dick our youngest, is going to University in Calgary and plays hockey with the University team. He is big too. Some of the girls live nearby too, so we have some big clan meetings. Vi and Jarvis Shail and Pat and Roy Mulligan live in this area. May and Herb Camplair live on Vancouver Island. Doris and Dick Cage live at Giscome near Prince George. Shirley married Bob Wilson, Hazel married Gary Sebastian, Helen married Doug Embury, Sharon married Roddy Russell and Gail married Bruce Davis.

We left the farm where I had lived for 43 years in 1960. At the time I had been secretary of the hall board for 13 years, a trustee for 15 years, the last 5 as chairman of the Elmworth school board. I also served my second term as president of the Farmers' Union.

We own our house in Hythe and last week we came back from a 2100 mile tour of the Okanagan. We made a trip to bury my oldest brother at High River on October 16, 1973.

So I am the last and youngest of the clan. It doesn't always work out that way.

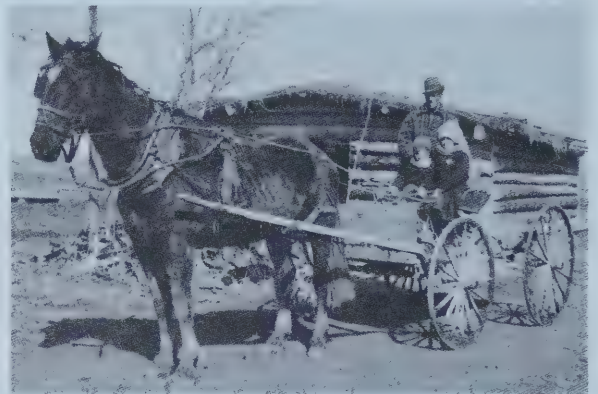
#### **WILLIAM MCGINNESS — by Juanita Tolway**

In 1916 Bill McGinness with his wife Hazel, daughter Juanita, and young son Jim came to Penzance, Saskatchewan from the United States. The spring of 1917 he and a friend hopped a train for Grande Prairie to look the great Peace River country over. The friend turned back but Bill hitched up his belt, rented a horse and buggy, and over a narrow, muddy road, headed for Pouce Coupe, looking for hunting and fishing grounds. He liked the country and returned for his family, taking them to the Gundy Ranch at Toms Lake. They worked there that winter.

Moving to Grande Prairie, he met Bill Renniger and they homesteaded together at Rio Grande, proving up with a team of oxen belonging to Ole Larsen. He gave that one up and for two years worked as a carpenter in Grande Prairie.

In 1920 he homesteaded again; this time on the Wapiti, at the Red Willow forks. In January of 1921, with team and sleigh, we moved there, taking two days for the trip. We stopped over at the Sherk place. We arrived at the homestead at 1:30 the following morning in thirty below weather. There was only one way down — a steep icy path. Mother and we kids sat down and slid, hitting the bottom in a flood of tears and cool seats. I'm sure it wasn't prayers mother was saying under her breath. That was our initiation to homesteading.

For five years we made out well, with Jim and I getting our education. Once a year dad went out for supplies. When he got a plough and harrows he broke



Bill McGinness, Juanita and Jimmie.



Bill McGinness with his big mule deer, 1948.

up a piece of land and planted strawberries which became known "country wide". We got a cow from Jack Freeborne who ran cattle in the big basin in 1922 and 1923.

Many amusing incidents took place. One Sunday in 1928, about noon, down the narrow path came an old Star car with two daring young men perched upon the seat, and chugging along very slowly. They were none other than Frank White and Otto Holter. Grandmother from California was cooking dinner on an outside stove and nearly fainted, but Frank assured her he had his foot on the brake while merrily waving a bottle around. After driving into the river, then into the berry shed, and getting a thorough cussing from mother, they proceeded quite soberly up the grade.

Art Hall and Bill Blair were our only near neighbors, as were the Brown and Moore families for a few years.

Jim and I finished schooling in Grande Prairie. He became an aeroplane mechanic and married a girl from Calgary. They had two boys. They now live in Manasses, Virginia.

I married Buck Schanuel in 1931. We raised a family of four, three girls and one boy. The girls are living in British Columbia, the boy in Alberta. Buck passed away in 1965. Mother went back to Seattle and passed away there in 1964. Dad left the old homestead and made his home at Invermere, B.C. till he passed away in 1968 at the age of 84.

I have eleven grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. I make my home at Hinton Trail, Alberta with my husband Pete Tolway.



Bill McGinness cooking at a hunting camp at Nose Mountain, 1940.

#### **JIM MCGOVERN — by Ian McEachern**

Jim McGovern filed on land at the top of the Red Willow hill in 1914, one of the first in that area.

There was no road or bridge across the river at that time but when Jim came back from the army in 1918 a road and a bridge had been built.

Jim was a bachelor and famous for various reasons. He was a rabid Liberal and loved to argue politics. Every time Len Jones would drive by, Jim would be out there looking for a political argument.

Once I was with Len and he argued until Jim jumped up and down he was so mad. Actually Len knew about as much about politics as my pet dog. So I said to Len, "Now why did you do that? Jim won't ever

speak to you again." Len laughed and said, "He'll be right out there next time I come along!"

Jim had a team of horses and one horse was always three feet ahead of the other. A neighbour asked him why he allowed this. "Well," Jim replied, "they are both willing, one willing to pull and the other willing to let him, so I don't see why I should interfere."

By some mishap his barn burned down in 1921. My brother Ervin gave him a set of logs for another barn and other neighbours helped him rebuild. Later on he insisted on giving Erwin a heifer for the logs.

Jim was a successful farmer and had done very well when he sold out to the Ingledews in 1928.

#### **VIC MCKAY — by Violet McKay**

Vic McKay was born in Cavan County, near Frazer-ville, Ontario in 1898. He was the fifth of twelve children born to Alex and Rachel McKay. The family moved to Rose Valley, Saskatchewan in 1912.

Vic worked for various farmers in Saskatchewan and Manitoba until 1919, when he moved to Fort Vermilion with Harry and Jim Gavel, with whom he worked until 1923. Then he returned to Saskatchewan. In the fall of 1924 he and a younger brother, Henry, went north to trap. In February 1925 Vic and Henry came to Halcourt with the Dave Sanderson family and in September of that year he married Violet Sanderson.

Vic trapped in the winter and worked out in summer until 1927 when he filed on land in the Hinton Trail district. He rented the Paul Kempton farm in 1928 and lived there until the spring of 1929 when they moved to their homestead north of the Just Moss place.

While we were building our house we stopped at Frank "papa" Cage's log shack to visit. There was a freshly baked pie on the shelf so we ate it. The next day I baked one and returned it. But the joke was on us as Frank did not return to his homestead for two or three months and needless to say the pie was uneatable by then.

We moved to our homestead in the spring of 1929 and our oldest daughter, Jean, Mrs. Don Quinn, was born in July at the home of Mrs. Ernest Harding. In the spring of 1931 we sold this homestead and with Angus and Lena Campbell from the Wapiti moved to Cecil Lake, B.C. We moved back to the Wapiti in October and our second daughter, Alice, Mrs. Dick McGuffin was born in December, 1931.

In August of 1932 we left the Wapiti for Saskatchewan, stopping at Slave Lake to visit Earl and Ruby Sanderson. While we were there, Earl lost his arm in a hunting accident. We remained there until February 1933 and went on to Rose Valley, Saskatchewan and also as far as Manitoba. We returned to Hinton Trail in November 1934 and Vic's brother, Bob, came with us from Saskatchewan. We bought the Wilmot Switzer place and lived on it till 1936. Then we moved to Halcourt to be nearer school.

Our son Tom was born in Hinton Trail in 1935 in September. Earl was born at Halcourt in October 1936. Our youngest daughter, Marguerite, Mrs. Douglas Schneider, was born in December 1937.

In the fall of 1934 Vic and Bob bought their first



truck, a 1928 Chevrolet one ton with a grain box and went into the trucking business. They remained partners until the early 1950's. Vic started farming at this time. He had bought the old Richardson place and farmed there until 1950. We sold this place to John Romanoff and bought the Paul Kempton place in Hinton Trail. We farmed there until Vic passed away in January 1967. Our son, his wife Alice (Warnke of Millet) bought the farm and live there now.

I live in Beaverlodge and keep very busy with my family, friends and hobbies.



Vic McKay's dog team, a matched outfit, part Husky. The sled is the one used on the trek from Fort Vermilion.

### JOHN WILLIAM METCALF

John William Metcalf was born in 1909 in Brandon, Manitoba. His wife, Rose Orlesky was born in 1912 in Souris, Manitoba. They were married in 1933 and had 7 children.

Doreen has two children, Jack and David Hemerle. She is now married to Harold Nichol from Beaverlodge and they live in Grande Prairie where both work for the pulp mill.

Rosemarie is married to Danny Sinclair of Grande Prairie and has two children, Gary and Christian. Danny owns a log truck and Rose works for the plywood plant in Grande Prairie.

Karol is married to Gordon Sinclair of Grande Prairie and has two children, Joan and Linda. Gordon works in the bush with his cat and Karol works for A.G.T.

Betty is married to Tommy Sinclair and has three children, Lori Lee, Patty and Hughie. Tommy has his own log truck and Betty works for A.G.T.

Tommy married Linda Graf from Beaverlodge. They bought his parent's farm and farm in the Hinton Trail district.

Joanne married Brian Wilson from Ontario. They have two children, Denise and Dwayne and live at Grovedale, 15 miles from Grande Prairie.

Jimmy lives in Grande Prairie with his mother, who moved there after Bill died in 1969.

### TOM METCALF FAMILY — by Sadie Ingledew

My father, Tom Metcalf, or Tiny as he was called in Hinton Trail because he was such a big man, was the son of a lawyer in Sunderland, England. In 1904 he came to Canada, a very young man looking for adventure and hoping sometime to have a farm where he

could lead a free, outdoor life. His first stop was Manitoba where he found work as a farm hand.

In Winnipeg he met and married my mother, Jane Cahoon who was from near Belfast, Ireland. She and her sister Mary were visiting friends in Canada. Aunt Mary returned to Ireland but Manitoba was a great place at that time and my mother decided to stay.

For the first few years my parents farmed near Brandon. Then they moved to Hyas, Saskatchewan where they stayed for two years. They had five children, four born in Manitoba.

William, the eldest son was a farmer and lumberman. He married Rose Orlesky from Wembley. They had seven children, two sons Thomas and James, five daughters — Doreen, Rosemarie, Karol, Betty and Joanne. They lived in the Haven district and Bill farmed the old homestead. He died in 1970.

Ernest filed on land one mile west of home. He died, 1930, aged 20 years.

Isobelle spent a number of years in England with an aunt. When she returned to Canada in 1922 she finished her schooling at Grande Prairie and obtained her Teacher's Certificate. She is married to Arnold Christianson of LaGlance. There are no children.

Sadie is a Registered Nurse, a graduate of the University of Alberta Hospital. She is married to George Ingledew and they have retired in Kelowna. They have one daughter, Louise and three sons — Thomas, Gordon, Robert.

Herbert was born in Grande Prairie and is a veteran of the Second World War, having served five years overseas with the Canadian Army. For a number of years he was a member of the Winnipeg City Police Force. He married Gaye Williams and they live in New Westminster, B.C. He has one stepson Victor and two daughters Diane and Dawn.

In 1919 my parents, tired of renting land decided to try homesteading in the Peace River country so in April of that year we arrived by train in the boom town of Grande Prairie. We couldn't find anywhere to stay; hotels and rooming houses were full. People at the Immigration Hall made room for us and we stayed there for a few days. Mr. and Mrs. Grieg, and their children, Gordon and Martha were also there preparing for the trip out to Hinton Trail. When the school was built in the new area it was named Craigellachie after Mr. Grieg's home in Scotland.

We stayed in Grande Prairie one year. Bill and Ernie were in school and dad worked in the power plant. It was a very hard winter, with so much snow that the trains couldn't run for weeks. Supplies were short and some foods like sugar and flour were rationed. They were also very expensive. But we enjoyed our stay and made some good friends there.

In July 1920 we set off for the homestead, our belongings and supplies piled on wagons. The first night we stayed at Luckey's stopping house, seven miles out of Grande Prairie. The second night we reached Halcourt and stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Harry Davis. They had been caring for our stock and the machinery was stored there. The third day we arrived at the homestead, NW 32-69-10-W6. What a desolate place! A prairie fire had swept through the area a few

years before and now there was only scrub willow and poplar dotted with charred grey stumps and clumps of fireweed. For a few weeks we lived in a tent loaned to us by the McEachern family while dad finished the log shack.

There was much to do the first years, building, clearing land, raising stock. Until deep wells were drilled, water was a problem for most people. We were either hauling water to the stock or driving the stock to water. The first crops were very good, tall and thick and used mostly for greenfeed. The gardens were wonderful and wild fruit was plentiful. For two winters dad worked at the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company so the chores were left to the boys and mother.

In 1922 the Craigellachie school was built, with much free labor from the district men. Dad was a member of that first school board. Later my mother was secretary-treasurer for a few years. When the school opened in January 1923 with ten pupils, Bill, Ernie and I were part of that first class. Through the years a number of teachers boarded at our place.

Gradually more settlers arrived in the district and we soon had an active community, with plenty of kids for the school and plenty of things to do. There were picnics, dances, concerts, basketball, baseball, plays and clubs with lots of friendship and good times. We all tried to take part when we could but of course there was always work to do as well. Our parents had to contend with the ups and downs of homesteading, the good times and the bad but through it all there seemed to be a lot of laughter and a lot of fun.

My parents stayed in this area until their death, my father in 1946 and mother in 1952.

The old homestead is now owned by Pete Sawchuk.

### **SAMUEL MOORE**

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Moore, Margaret Jones' parents, moved to Hinton Trail in the spring of 1929 bringing in all their farming and household effects. They stayed with the Leonard Jones until they built a cabin on the homestead which Sam filed on in the Rivers Vale district. By this time, there were four or five families already settled and we were in need of a school.

Sam farmed his homestead until they lost their home by fire. It was decided to rebuild but as it was winter time he caught a bad cold and really never recovered. They moved to Beaverlodge where he lived a short time. Later Mrs. Moore purchased a small house in Beaverlodge for herself where she lived until her death in 1949.

### **JUST MOSS — by Evelyn Moss**

Just was born in Norway and came to North Dakota, U.S.A. in 1904. He moved to Lomond, Alberta in 1911 and lived there until 1927. I was born in England and came to Canada with my parents in 1907 where we settled near Delburne, Alberta. I met Just in 1922 while serving as a teacher in the district school where he farmed. We were married May 22, 1923.

In 1927 after many years of dry weather that forced people to leave and schools to close, we moved to the Peace River country. Just travelled with two freight cars of horses, cattle, machinery and household effects to Wembley, the end of the steel at that time, a

trip of 800 miles. I followed a month later with Agnes and Irene, our two little girls, aged two and four years.

We were at Wembley for one year, during which time Just filed on a homestead at Hinton Trail. In the spring of 1928, a 14 x 20 building was erected. The site was a sandy knoll with numerous burned out pine stumps. However, it was nice to know the fire had been through and maybe would not occur again.

A well was also dug, striking water at ten feet. Arrangements were made with neighbours returning from town to help bring out our household furnishings. The girls and I came as far as the Red Willow bridge with friends and Just met us there with team and democrat to take us the last four miles, which was very difficult due to the spring breakup. Everything went well and soon we were in our new home, ready for a new start.

The first two years we rented land from neighbors who did not have farm equipment of their own and at the same time breaking land on our own place. A third little girl, Ella was born in the spring of 1930 and that fall saw the older girls very ill with scarlet fever. I spent twelve days with them in an isolation ward at Grande Prairie and Just cared for the baby.

In 1932 we bought another quarter of land and later a grazing quarter. An addition was built to the house in 1936 giving us a 28 x 28 dwelling.

During the 1940's Just made a change to a small line of power machinery and shortly after bought a combine. We missed the good old threshing gangs and the excitement of harvest. We found the seasons rather short for growing wheat so decided to try registered Victory oats and went into dual-purpose, purebred Red Poll cattle. There was a ready market for seed, and many of the cows were sold around the district. With the remainder we carried on a small dairy business, shipping the cream to Grande Prairie.

The girls attended the Craigellachie school one and a half miles west of us. Some of the teachers were local girls and they fitted in well with the life of the people.

With a lack of social life, especially for the women, a Ladies Community Club was formed in 1940. My husband and I found time to take our turn serving on the different boards and committees both social and educational.

The 1950's saw a trend towards centralized schools and soon school was closed and the building sold. This



The Moss family in the 30's with Mrs. Hastings and baby Noriene and their old Ford.



gave rise to the building of a community hall for social events, which was done mostly with volunteer help and material.

Many of us like to remember the little country store which played an important part of the early days. We had bad luck and crop failures in those years too and oft times needed a little longer to pay our grocery bills.

We now found ourselves alone to carry on the work of the farm. The family had grown up and were married or had gone to jobs of their own. Just and I carried on for ten years. When harvest came, I drove the truck to haul the grain or would help on the combine. In 1960 we rented the farm and in 1967 sold it and moved to Beaverlodge.

This, 1973 is our sixth year in town and our 50th anniversary was on May 22. On August 16, 1973 Just passed on in his 87th year.

#### **ARTHUR AND HELEN MOUNCE — by Betty Halldorson**

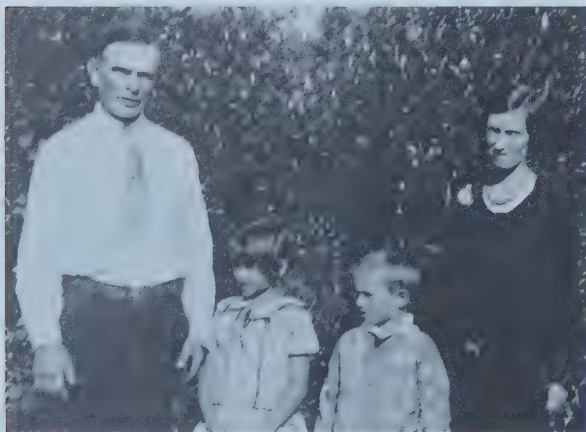
Arthur and Helen Mounce came to the Hinton Trail district in the spring of 1928 from Lewiston, Idaho.

Mother's father, Frank E. (Wapiti) Brown had come to the Peace River country in 1918 and loved the north country. Thus he had a great deal to do with my parents' decision to make this country their home.

Dad came first with a carload of settlers' effects and Mother followed with my brother Joe and me. We had not come as soon as planned because after dad left Idaho, Joe and I took the measles so it was a joyous reunion when we got together in Wembley. Our new home was land purchased from Roy Dundas and this was where my parents made their home for the rest of their lives. The log house had only two rooms. The first year must have been a very busy time, with building two more rooms on the house and clearing more land.

My parents were not really settled when the hungry thirties came and like everyone else it was a very hard and busy life trying to feed and clothe the family. It was during these years that my brother Jerry was born.

I heard my mother say many times "I will live in my house by the side of the road and be a friend to man," and I truly believe that my parents tried to live by this quotation.



Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Mounce with Betty and Joe. 1930.

My mother had taught school before she was married and she took a very active part in all the community activities, especially those for the church and school. She was always busy helping put on things like chicken suppers and later adult plays that would raise money for various projects. Dad always lent her his quiet support.

#### **HARRY MOUSER**

Harry Mouser was born in Ipswich, England in 1902. In 1907 his family and he came to Canada and settled in Minnedosa, Manitoba. His mother passed away when he was 13. He had one brother who passed away in 1968 and two sisters still living. When his mother passed on his father took the two girls back to England to be raised by relatives. Harry didn't see his sisters again until 1972 and 1973 when they came to Canada to visit with him.

In 1918 at the age of 16 he left Minnedosa and made his way up to Edson where he worked in a round house servicing locomotives. In the spring of 1919 he met a man by the name of Ed Barton and together they travelled over the Edson Trail, helping a family by the name of Southwicks.

Harry tells that when he was batching on the homestead he had a dog and 100 chickens. At meal time he would cook up a batch of a dozen eggs and place them before the dog. The dog would smile as a gesture of gratitude and eat the eggs. This went on meal after meal and everything seemed to be going well until the dog was once more again served the eggs. Then the usual smile followed and the dog walked away, with tears in its eyes.

Yes, times were hard and on one occasion there was no money to buy another \$5.00 ploughshare. Moreover Harry had recently fallen through the seat of his only pair of pants and thus was in no position to go to town. By this time a neighbour came to the rescue with the needed funds and when Harry got around to it he would break 12 acres of land for his benefactor!

In the fall of 1919 he and Ed Barton spent the winter trapping furs at Nose Mountain. Between 1919 and 1921 he worked for farmers around Wembley and Buffalo Lakes. He homesteaded in the fall of '21 in the Hinton Trail district. He and Scotty Gordon batched together up till the time Harry was married. In 1938 he married Lucy Hall, daughter of Mrs. James Elsander. They have three children, one boy and two girls: Ruth, Mrs.



Harry Mouser, February 1930.

Jack Smith lives at the Research Station where Jack works, they have 2 boys and a girl; Keith is married to Pat Kronowitt and works on an oil rig in Taiwan, they have a boy and a girl; Sandra, Mrs. Garry Dyck lives at High Level, Garry works for the Forestry Department.

Harry and his wife are still farming in the Hinton Trail district.

#### JACK AND GLADYS RAY

In 1911 Jack, second son of George Alex Ray and Margaret Ray came over the Edson Trail with his parents to the Halcourt district at the age of seven years. Here he, like all other lads enjoyed the great out-doors, went to school at Appleton and learned at an early age to handle horses. Amateur rodeos at the home farmstead and at neighbors afforded many a lively afternoon of entertainment with bronc busting, steer riding and riding bucking horses. In the winter the Ray boys could be seen on horseback chasing coyotes for the pelts that would bring them a few extra dollars. Four or five a day was considered a good day's 'take' and a winter might yield as many as 75.

In 1928 Jack's father, Alex Ray took the mail hauling contract and Jack moved into town, lived with Mr. Halliday and drove for his father. Later on his brothers Bob and Alex took turns also at hauling the mail.

Jack was fond of his fun and enjoyed the local dances. It was at the dances around Rio Grande and Halcourt that he met Gladys Quinn. Gladys was the eldest daughter of Tom and Bella Quinn (better known as "Ma" Quinn). They came to the Rio Grande area in 1928.

In 1931 Jack and Gladys were married. Jack had a homestead in the Two Rivers area on the river bank next to his father's. It was here their first daughter Lorraine was born. They farmed there with their horses until 1936 when they rented land from Jim McBlain at Hinton Trail and Jack moved his family and equipment over there. They farmed there for another six years in which time Joan was born in 1936 and Delbert in 1940. They moved again — this time to Beaverlodge where Donna was born in 1941. Jack worked with his father in the livery barn until they got the mail contract back in 1943. From then on the mail was his life. Lloyd was born in 1944.

The story of the "mail haul" is very much the story of the Jack Rays. For only one short period of time has anyone but a Ray hauled the mail to the post office south and west of Beaverlodge.

When Alex Ray Senior first contracted for the haul it was a two day trip. Jack or Bob drove for him and they would stay at Frank Brewers overnight to rest and feed their team before making the 28 mile trip back. In winter it was with sleighs, in summer with the democrat until 1940 when cars were more feasible. The road to Hazelmore "was far from good" and the family vividly remember the time grand-dad took the car, hit a stump and tore off the oil pan. Hazelmore was a long way from a garage in those days!

In 1943 Jack took the contract himself and began making the round trip of 56 miles in a day. For six or seven years he used to leave a team at Tom Williams and pick up a fresh team for the return trip. After that

he left his spare team at his mother-in-law's, Ma Quinn. By now he was driving a closed rig with a stove in it for comfort.

Getting horses and sleigh through snowbanks and upsets was just part of the day's work. Gladys remembers one trip where Jack took the mail on horseback and had to ride through water up to the horses withers. Another hardship was when the Rio Grande bridge would be impassable and he'd have to back-track to Halcourt in order to cross the river and get the mail to Hazelmore. Gladys said she could get "quite riled" because there was no extra pay for these longer hauls but Jack was of a more philosophical frame of mind, "Never mind! Whatever will be, will be!" "He never complained," she said, "even though he'd be half frozen." Lots of times he'd be as late as midnight getting back to town. The postmaster, Art Dixon used to wait patiently until midnight — then if Jack wasn't in he'd allow Jack to keep the mail in his kitchen over night. On rough days when it was storming and there were only phones on the barbed wire fences, Gladys would worry about him and never be happy until he was in at night. One Christmas eve Jack was really late. When he got home he unhitched his horses and slapped them on the back to start them to the barn. One road-weary mare saw the houselight and stumbled over to the kitchen door before she was aware it wasn't her warm barn.

In spring a two-wheeled cart proved to be the best mode of travel until the roads were improved enough to be called "all weather roads". Jack hauled the mail every Saturday and Wednesday starting out about 9:00 a.m. and left mail at Halcourt, Leighmore, Rio Grande, Hazelmore, Elmworth and Hinton Trail — then back to Halcourt and Beaverlodge. And as an added bonus he usually had a passenger or two.

Jack's contract in 1943 said that the mail must be carried in a suitable vehicle, that the mail bags "should be delivered into and taken from the post office at each terminus in five minutes" (no loitering please)—including the emptying of his shoulder bag if he had picked up letters en route from persons who lived more than one mile from the post office. The officials were very strict about bags that were left unattended at any time. Furthermore the contract said that the mail carrier was to keep due custody of the mail bags in his charge, protected from weather and dangers of all kinds; that he was obliged to carry any accredited agent of the post office department, that he wasn't to expect any reimbursement from the Postmaster General for road or bridge damage that created a hardship for him or his horses, or caused damage to his vehicle should there be a mishap. And for all these 104 trips a year the Government of Canada offered him the munificent sum of \$750.00 per annum — a little more than \$7.00 per trip.

By 1971 that wage had more than tripled but the trips were now four times a week and Elmworth was the only post office served. Group Box Sites (G.B.S.) had been established to create a rural route. Now instead of six stops the mail man makes 26 stops, gets out at each stop and delivers his pre-sorted mail into the Group Boxes.



In 1949 Jack bought Fletcher Smith's store at Hinton Trail. While living there he also bought out "Wapiti" Brown's big game outfitting equipment and managed that for a good many years. Although Jack hauled the produce from Grande Prairie once a week to keep the store operating it was mainly Gladys and the two girls who looked after the store. Jack himself found guides for bear hunts in the spring and moose, sheep, goats, elk and deer in the fall. He had about 80 horses and would often have four or five hunting parties out at a time. "Wapiti" Brown had had a good clientele established and Jack did really well until other outfitters started.

In April 1954 Ray's store burned down. The Rays continued to live at Hinton Trail until 1966 when due to Jack's ill health they moved back to Beaverlodge.

Of Jack and Gladys's family their three daughters; Lorraine Ducharme, Joan Dupuis and Donna Harding are all living in the district. Delbert married Irene Gray of Penticton where they live. Lloyd is single and lives in Beaverlodge. There are 12 grandchildren.

Of Gladys herself, many will recall her smiling face and willing helpfulness behind the counter of the Super A Store. She worked there for seven years but in 1974 took over the laundry at the hospital. She was very happy meeting the public. Unfortunately Jack was killed in a car accident in 1970. Gladys and Lloyd live in the Walton apartments in Beaverlodge.

#### STANNARD RONKSLEY

Stannard Ronksley grew up in Yorkshire, England and spent two years in college before he migrated to Chilliwack with his brother Kenneth, at the age of 19. He was a cabinet maker by trade and had a contracting business there until he and Ken decided to try homesteading in the Peace. He met his wife Theresa, an Irish immigrant in Chilliwack.

In the spring of 1918, Stan moved into Hinton Trail with his settler's effects - notably a team of horses, a saddle mare, a Jersey cow bred to a Guernsey bull, the start of a good dairy herd. A week after his arrival at the homestead he drove to Grande Prairie to meet the family and found his wife ill with pneumonia. She died there and his three girls were given a home by the Alex Karr family, who had come in with them until Stan's mother came to care for them. The homestead must have seemed very primitive to one who had ridden to the hounds in England but she dug in and roughed it with the rest.

The family lived in a tent with a wooden floor the first summer while Stan built his log house hewn on the inside with a broad axe. Kathleen nearly passed away with the 'flu' epidemic in 1918. Gradually land was cleared by hand and the white clay soil produced good crops and good gardens. Wild berries were abundant in the bush. The first winter Stan melted snow for water for the livestock. Then they dug a 40 foot well. His mother Jessie started Eileen and Kathleen on studies until the Craigellachie school was built in 1923.

Money was scarce and most of the dealings were by barter. Wheat flour, and porridge were ground by a horse-powered sweep grinder. During the depression Stan would not accept government relief but struggled on. He became the first postmaster at Hinton Trail and

so the Ronksley place became the weekly meeting place of neighbours when the mail was delivered.

The entire family rode horseback. When the school was closed the children rode to the Halcourt school. Afterwards they attended high school at Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie. Stan and Eileen each had a trap line. Eileen was thus able to pay for her own school books. They all picked blueberries for sale. Sometimes their grain was frozen but "next year will be better".

When the family were still quite young Mrs. Ronksley, the grandmother found it necessary to return to Chilliwack to nurse her son Kenneth.

Eileen married Geoff Lock and lives in Florida where she is a professional harness race horse trainer and driver. Kathleen married Walter Callister and lives in Port Alberni. Gladys married Turner Rowan and lives in Seattle, Washington.

Stan sold the farm in 1954 and went to live with Kathleen at Port Alberni where he had the time to build the house of his dreams. His last few years were very happy ones, enjoying Saturday night dances and whist parties with Kathleen and Walter. He passed away suddenly in the spring of 1959 and at the age of 72. He is buried in Greenwood cemetery, Port Alberni.

The Ronksley story is one of pioneering and persistence, of striving for ideals and happiness at the end of the rainbow.

#### EDSON TRAIL — by Caroline Sanderson

We left Edson, July 30, 1913 with my husband, Dave and our family, Earl, Wallace, Ernie and Violet, and five other men, all bound for Grande Prairie. It was 3:30 p.m. when we pulled out and we camped that night at Rosis Stopping Place 10 miles out. We left Rosis the next morning about 8 a.m. and camped at Nose Creek, 25 miles from Edson, without an accident.

We had three wagons with horses, all heavily loaded with supplies and equipment and 16 head of cattle. We met several bad places in the road, and this made the travelling considerably slower. On Friday we made only seven miles and we camped that night at House River. We left there Saturday morning at 6:45 a.m. and arrived at 35 Mile House at 7:00 p.m. I had to bake biscuits and get supper for the men and children. It was about 10 a.m. the next morning when we got straightened around and on the road again. That day, one of the teams backed over a bridge and fell into the river. The country was rough and hilly. We arrived at the Athabasca River at 11 a.m. Sunday morning and crossed on the ferry. We pulled up to Baptise Creek about 3 p.m. and camped for the night. Thus the horses would have time to feed and rest. The mosquitoes were bad here.

Monday, August 4, broke camp and left without breakfast. We drove six or seven miles to the Little Smoky river where we stopped for two hours before fording the river. I got three eggs from a Scotsman and when we camped at Tony river on the south side of the Smoky I made some pies. The next day at noon we camped at 100 Mile Place. That night there was not much feed for the horses.

Wednesday, August 6, the horses strayed away from camp. It was 11 a.m. when we finally got away and we went on to the Mail Camp. One of the men,



Angus Thompson was sick all day with a tooth ache. It was 2 p.m. when we arrived at 120 Mile Creek and we stayed there until the next day, then we left camp about 7:15 a.m. We had lunch and tea but the men had no dinner. They had gone with the cattle. Bob Hunter had lunch at a creek and he fed the horses. He got to House river at 6 p.m. The other men were ahead of him about two hours. A man who had lost two cows was camping there with a party of four. Friday we got up at 5:15 a.m., baked biscuits and left at 7:45. We had a cold lunch about 2 p.m. It rained all day and we were delayed on account of very bad road. Some brush was needed to corduroy the road. Got to Moose Creek about 7 p.m. and it was still raining. I had to bake biscuits and make supper. We cooked beans for the first time. It was late when we got up at 7 a.m. Tommy's team was lost, so it was 11:45 when we left camp. We went four miles and camped for dinner. Our horses were tired that night.

Sunday, August 10 we got up at 5:30 and did not get away from camp until 7:45, then drove until 11:15 and camped for dinner. We reached a road camp at 4 p.m. There was about a mile and half of bad road ahead of us, and we got to a creek about 6 p.m. and it was starting to rain, and rained all evening. Violet fell into the creek that night. Mrs. Sanderson baked fresh biscuits and had them and boiled beans for supper. During the night a cow ate the rest of the beans.

Monday August 11, left camp at 7:45 and got to Sturgeon Lake at 10 a.m. and went to the Hudson Bay Store and bought more supplies.

We got to Grande Prairie on August 16th, 1913.

#### CLIFF SANDERSON

Cliff was born at Fort Vermilion and trekked with his family to the Halcourt district in 1924, then to the banks of the Wapiti. He was a mechanic and a truck driver until his health failed about 1968. He makes his home in Beaverlodge.

Dave Sanderson and friends.



#### DAVID SANDERSON

Dave George Sanderson was born near Listowel, Ontario. His father was of Irish descent and his mother Scottish, of the McFarlane clan.

The family came west in 1885, the year of the Riel Rebellion and settled north of Brandon, Manitoba to farm a rather large acreage. Dave was operating the ferry at Saskatoon at the time of the Barr Colonists trek.

Dave was a blacksmith by trade and reached Edmonton in 1912. There he ran a delivery business and had a blacksmith shop until the spring of 1913, when he headed for Edson and on to the Peace with Tracie Williams, who settled in the Grande Prairie district. In the fall of 1913 Dave returned to Edmonton for his family.

Dave ran the J. M. (Silver Tip) Campbell place in 1914 and 1915, and moved to the Halcourt area in the



Ernie and Dave Sanderson.



fall of 1915. In 1916 he returned to Grande Prairie to run the Red Barn, where the N.A.D.P. was formerly located. In the summer of 1918 the family moved overland to Peace River Crossing where Dave sawed lumber. His next move was to build a scow and move on to Fort Vermilion, where he worked for Sheridan Lawrence during the winter of 1918-19. He freighted to Vermilion Chutes until the fall of 1921, when he returned to farm on Buffalo Head Prairie. The family returned by team to Halcourt, arriving in mid-March, 1924. They settled near the banks of the Wapiti River where Dave died in 1934.

Dave married Caroline McDonald, who had come from Scotland when she was quite young. She was a lover of Highland dancing. She passed away in 1966.

Earl Sanderson recalls that his father was essentially a teamster and also an excellent blacksmith. He loved to call square dances, even for an entire night. In his time he led the Grand March of the Firemen's Ball in Brandon, and sometimes the crowd was so large that the floor sagged.

The family consisted of: Earl — Married Ruby Smith of Fort Vermilion. Wallace — Died at Peace River 1921 from food poisoning. Violet — Married Vic McKay, a cattleman in Saskatchewan. Vic passed away in 1968. Ernie — Married Marion Spence of Hinton Trail. Ernie passed away in 1973. Bill — Single, a sawyer and millwright. Cliff — Single, a mechanic.

#### EARL SANDERSON

Earl was born at Winnipegosis, Manitoba, in 1902 and came west with the family. The family operated the Fort Vermilion ferry from 1923 to 1925 and Earl operated it himself in 1926.

Earl married Ruby Smith of Fort Vermilion in 1923 and the couple moved to Camas, Washington, following a neighbor who had recently returned there. The family returned to Canada the fall of 1928, to Edmonton, where Earl worked in the C.N.R. roundhouse until 1931 as watchman and hostler. Earl says a hostler is the man who moves locomotives in and out of roundhouses. Earl then moved to Slave Lake where he worked as a garage mechanic and trucked



Ruby Sanderson and Violet McKay.

for Charlie Schurter. There he had the misfortune to lose an arm in a hunting accident.

The Sandersons moved to Hinton Trail in the fall of 1933 to be part of the Sanderson sawmill. They moved on to Beaverlodge in 1941 and there Earl was employed as a trucker, rink manager, hospital maintenance supervisor and projectionist. During 1953-62 he was an engineer and diesel electric operator at the Radar Base. Between times he farmed and served a term on the County Council. The loss of an arm has not been a serious deterrent to Earl and his good nature has pervaded his work at all times.

Ruby's father, Warren Smith, was born in the United States and farmed near Rimbey from 1913 to 1920, when he moved to Fort Vermilion. He retired to the Fraser Valley but returned to the Peace in 1961 and passed away in 1965.

Ruby's mother died in Grande Prairie in 1973, age 91.

Ruby is a qualified hairdresser and an ardent gardener. Remember her raspberry patch in Beaverlodge?

The family consists of:

Donald — married Marion Jones of Halcourt. He served with the R.C.A.F., is a projectionist and heavy duty mechanic.

Harold — married to Beulah Lowe. He is a graduate of S.A.I.T. and is an airplane mechanic.

Norman — married to Muriel Atkinson. He is an insurance agent.

Shirley — married to Bud Zieffle, a laboratory technician.

Virginia Lawrence is a niece of Mrs. Sanderson and grew up as a member of the family. She married Norman Isley of Elmworth.



Earl Sanderson at Slave Lake, 1932.

## ERNIE SANDERSON

David Aaron Sanderson was born at Spy Hill, Saskatchewan while the Dave Sandersons stopped there for a year or so. The nickname Ernie came from an uncle, Aaron Sanderson. He lived at home until 1934 when he married Marion Spence. He farmed for a while and later was a mechanic in the Beaverlodge and Hythe garages.

There was one son, Raymond, married to Margaret Parlee of Grande Prairie and now living in Grande Prairie. Ernie died in 1973 and Marion lives in Hythe.



The Sanderson family trekking from Fort Vermilion to Halcourt. Dave Sanderson, Violet and Vic McKay.1924.

## BILL SANDERSON

William Calvin Sanderson was born 1916 on the Walter Waldo place, on the bank of the Red Willow River, the first white child in the Halcourt district. He served with the Forestry Corps in World War II, but otherwise has been engaged in sawmill work. Currently he is sawing in a large push-button mill in the Swan Hills, north of Fort Assiniboine.

## WILLIAM AND VIOLETTE SCORGIE

William Scorgie was born at Buckie, Banffshire, Scotland, March 1, 1892. He came to Canada when he was 19 years of age and after working in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, settled in Chilliwack, B.C. There he met Archibald McEachern, a building contractor and his family. In the summer of 1916, he, with Archie and Roy Dundas decided to journey to the Peace River district to look for land. They arrived in Grande Prairie, after seemingly walking most of the way behind the first passenger train from Edmonton. The railroad had arrived in Grande Prairie only a few weeks earlier. They rented a team and buggy and drove to the area south of the Red Willow river, now known as the Hinton Trail district. Here Bill filed on the NE 18-70-10 and chose a site near the creek on which to build his cabin. There, water would be plentiful. The family water supply was carried by pailfuls from this creek for many years after. Ed Sheppard, a drayman of Grande Prairie, was hired to haul lumber, nails and windows to the homestead. His nephew, Tom Sheppard, still lives in the Rio Grande district. John Finnegan of Halcourt hauled the logs, cut on the homestead, to the cabin site. Bill and Archie then proceeded to build a neat log cabin, living in a tent until it was completed. Then, with forethought, they had a fire guard plowed around the cabin before leaving to return to Grande Prairie to do carpenter work till fall. The little cabin was saved from a fire

which swept the country that fall, by this fire guard. It was the first cabin built in township 70, west of the Red Willow.

Bill and Archie returned to Chilliwack for the winter. In the spring of 1917, Mrs. McEachern and children Violette, Doug and Ian arrived in Grande Prairie, followed a few days later by Archie McEachern and Bill Scorgie with a carload of settlers' effects, including furniture, two horses, a cow and some chickens. They journeyed out to the homestead, fording the Red Willow river, and finally arriving to settle the McEachern family in the Scorgie cabin. Their closest neighbors were Mr. and Mrs. Ren Spence and family, including their son and daughter-in-law Spurgeon and Edna Spence and their daughter Marion. Violette McEachern remained in Grande Prairie where she was working in Billy Salmon's Hotel.

Bill Scorgie and Violette were married on January 2, 1918. They lived the first winter in a tent while another cabin was being built for the McEachern family.

Bill broke the first land on his homestead with a wooden-beam walking plow. In those early years he frequently walked the 40 miles to the nearest town, Grande Prairie, fording the Red Willow river until the first bridge was built. Later he hauled his grain by team and sleigh to Wembley, often walking behind the load to keep warm on bitterly cold days.

In 1922-23 Bill, with Archie McEachern and Stan Ronskley built the local school, Craigellachie. Here the six Scorgie children received their early education.

Bill operated a Frontier Lumber Company yard for several years on the corner of his farm, just east across the road from the present site of the Hinton Trail hall. About this time he also built a large frame house where the Scorgie farmyard is still located. The family moved from the log house on the homestead to a new house, in 1932. The log house had been enlarged over the years. Bill, who owned a Star car by this time, drove many miles around the country in connection with his lumber business.

Bill was always active in community affairs, including the building of the community hall. At one time he also worked in the local coal mine on the Red Willow.

The Scorgies were avid gardeners, growing a huge vegetable garden every year. Vi also loved flowers and her yard was a riot of color. Especially beautiful were her roses. For many years their home was a gathering place for the young people and a boarding place for the local teacher. Extra places were often set at the table for strangers and neighbors.

The Scorgie children included Ellen (Mrs. Harold Graf); Elmer (Sandy) of Rio Grande; Alta (Mrs. Ray Fain, Abilene, Texas); Leonard and LaVerne of Hinton Trail; and Jean (Mrs. Alex Cameron, Flying Shot.)

Bill Scorgie died in August 1963 and Violette a short time later in December 1964.

Alta attended the McTavish college in Edmonton. In 1944 she married Raymond Fain who was stationed at Dawson Creek with the U.S. Army. They live in Abilene, Texas and have three sons, Michael, Melvin and Robert and two grandchildren. Their eldest son



Michael spent one year in Viet Nam, flying an aircraft. Melvin is an architect and Robert is a mechanic.

Verne's high school education in Beaverlodge was interrupted in 1944 when he enlisted in the Regina Rifles. After training at Camrose and Calgary, he went overseas, spending 1½ years in occupation service in Holland and Germany. After returning home and receiving his discharge in 1946, Verne and his brother Len, took over the work on their father's farm. In 1949 Verne married Alice Wood of the Hermit Lake district. They have five children: Elouise (Mrs. Lorne Johnson) who took her schooling at Elmworth and Beaverlodge and nurses' training at the Royal Alex Hospital and the U. of A. in Edmonton; Eleanor (Mrs. James Martin) who also attended Elmworth and Beaverlodge schools and trained as a dietitian at the U. of A. and Royal Alex Hospitals in Edmonton; Daphne, who took her early schooling at Elmworth and is now taking her last semester of grade twelve in Beaverlodge; Gary and Ramona, are attending school at Elmworth.

Jean, "last of the batch", was born in 1935 and took her high school at Elmworth and Grande Prairie. She worked in Watcher's Jewelry in Grande Prairie for several years. In 1954 she married Alex Cameron Junior of Flying Shot district. Jean's father and Alex's father had been friends as children in Scotland. Alex and Jean lived in Grande Prairie for 16 years, during which time he was a construction superintendent for Tissington Industries. In 1970 they moved to the original Cameron farm in the Flying Shot district. Jean and Alex have three children, Terry, Shelley and Sandee, as well as a nephew and a niece Curtis and Dianne Cameron. Curtis and Dianne are children of Alex's brother Ted and his wife Anne (Wood) who died when the children were small.



Christmas, 1934. (L) Alta Scorgie, Lorna Lock, Ellen Scorgie, Blin Brush, Ethel Lock, Mrs. Scorgie and Jean, Howard Lock, Laverne Scorgie, Leonard Scorgie.

#### CHARLES SMITH — by Doris Smith

The C. A. Smith family arrived in Wembley, then the end of the steel, on March 5th, 1928. It was a long journey for a mother with seven children, ten years to six months — Mary, Mabel, Bert, Bill, Joe, Sandy and Pete, as dad had come on ahead. After driving by team

and cutter from Wembley we arrived at the R. L. Jones farm in the Hinton Trail district. That night it was cold and snowy but we shall always remember the next day or so when it Chinooked and soon there was water running — something we had never experienced in Manitoba. We stayed there for the summer and in the fall moved to the homestead S.E. 19-69-10 on the banks of the Wapiti. The hard times were just starting and through the years it would have been very hard to feed a family of ten as there were three more born — Jean, Jack and Mike — if it hadn't been for dad hunting wild game and the large garden we always had.

Our near and very good neighbors were the Angus Campbells, Dave Sandersons, Jack Birches, Ed Barrett, then a bachelor, Paul Browns and Bob Archers. Our nearest store was at Halcourt and the post office was at the Ronksley home. A few years later a store was built at Hinton Trail. The older children walked or rode horseback if the horses were not being used for farm work, to the Craigellachie school. Later the Haven school district was formed and the younger children attended there.



Charlie Smith putting up ice on the Wapiti river, 1930.

#### THE FLETCHER SMITH STORY

About 1949 or 1950 the Reader's Digest came out with a story called "The Sunday Lady from Possum Trot". Briefly it told of a rich young lady's boredom. One day as she sat reading on the lawn of the family estate, and munching candy, she became aware of urchin faces in the shrubbery watching her. With offers of candy she enticed them onto the lawn where she proceeded to make their acquaintance. After several days she was reading them stories and little by little she began teaching the children. When her parents died and left their huge estate to her she

turned it into a school for underprivileged children. The children took up residence at her school and had to work to maintain the place and to retain their right to the education they received there.

As time went on Henry Ford became interested and endowed the institution heavily. He in turn interested a U.S.A. Senator and the school eventually became the Berry College — where Fletcher Smith and Ione Derder met. By this time the college was no longer just for underprivileged children but the work ethic was still one of the main factors in the education of the youth. The pupils had the right to choose where they would work — in the kitchen, laundry, garden or barns, — but work somewhere they must. Now read Evelyn Rose's history of her family, the John Fletcher Smiths.

John Fletcher Smith was born in Kinsington, Georgia in 1900. He finished his education at Berry College, in Georgia, U.S.A., spent a year at Georgia Tech. and earned a B.Sc. in Agriculture from the University of Georgia. Mother Ione Derden completed her education at Berry College and became a teacher. They were married December 29, 1928. Five days later mom went back to her classroom and dad came to Canada. Mother came to Canada in May, 1929.

Dad worked as a salesman for the Oliver Machine Company and had a partnership in a garage business at Beaverlodge where they introduced the Hart Parr farm tractor taking farm horses in trade.

In the summer of 1933 our house was wiped out by fire. I was three years old at the time but I can still remember how my mother cried when she picked up her suit from the clothes closet and it was burned into a charred mass. The only thing that was left that still worked was one light bulb.

That summer was a turning point in our lives. We moved out to the Riley Elliott home on the Wapiti river and stayed with them until dad was able to get a roof over our heads. I remember Mr. Elliott used to sit in a big leather chair and play his fiddle. It seemed the entire community was there dancing in his living room. That summer my father would load up the Ford with cases of strawberries and go as far north as Fort St. John. He sold them for 25¢ per basket or \$4.00 per case. He made enough money to buy the hull of a store building from Mel and Dagmar Sutton, located across the road from the community hall at Hinton Trail.

That winter was pretty "tough". We moved into the hull and dad started a small store. The first stock we had was sacks of flour on consignment. Dad borrowed \$300 on his life insurance and put in a fairly good stock. I can remember that people used to come from a long distance with team and horses for groceries. We were well received in the community.

By the following winter dad was able to get up another stock and with the help of Sam Unruh he went out on horseback to Grande Cache and started a trading post there. Mel Sutton helped mom run the store at Hinton Trail that winter. In the spring when dad returned loaded with furs and hides we were a family again.

Father was a hard worker and would go anywhere to earn a living, but the only time I can remember that he ever worked for wages was when he took his truck

up on the Alaska Highway for six months when the Highway was being built.

I can't remember what year he started sawmilling, but saw he did for many years with a mill across the Wapiti river and later up the Monkman Pass, about two miles from Stony Lake. One winter he couldn't get a cook so I went with him; another year mother went and I do think it helped us to understand his love of the outdoors better. He loved the woods, lumber and his gardens. What he has left us shows it too.

My husband and I purchased the family farm and home after his passing. We still have the pine planking in the living room that dad picked out so carefully and we have enlarged the strawberry plot he loved so much.

My brothers, Buzz, Jack and Clark are living away but they too have been touched by some of the influence of this pioneer.

Buzz, who married Jean Stringer lives in Mayo, Yukon Territory and has a guiding business. They have five children; Barbara, Patsy, Jack, Carol and Martha.

Jack, is an estimator and carpenter and has a business of his own. He too enjoys the outdoors. Jack married Ruth Olson of Beaverlodge. They have four children Lee, Kim, Val, and Clinton.

Clark, who married Doreen Stark of Edmonton and now lives there, is employed in construction too. Clark is keenly interested in cars, trucks and machinery. He has three children, Cindy, Ramona and Janice.

I am the eldest child and only daughter of Ione and Fletcher Smith. I married David Rose of the Bonanza district. We share a florist business in Grande Prairie and spend our spare time on the farm. We have two children, Mary Alice and Bob.

Throughout this short history mother has been mentioned, but not with due credit. She was a wonderful helpmate for our father and was with him all of the way. She was the other half that shared the good times and the bad. She was more outgoing and interested in social life. She had a fondness for books which we, her children all share. She had an interest in music and drama. I feel that without her touch a lot of the good times would have been missed.

I can remember mother taking us to church and Sunday school, to musical programs and to plays. I remember her paying for music lessons which she could ill afford, but she managed by not getting the new coat for which she had saved. But these were the things that mattered to her. The thing that mattered to our parents and the sacrifices that they made, did help mold the citizens that we strive to be today.

When the Smiths lived in Beaverlodge Ione "Georgia Smith" friends were legion. In fact Fletcher said of her, "Ione never met a stranger!" Being such an out-going person it was not surprising to find her singing in the church choir and the cantatas that were produced in town, and being an active member of the W.A. where every meeting was gayer because of her "embellished" stories told in her soft southern drawl and followed by her infectious laughter. We recall her demonstrating the ironing of a man's shirt at one W.A. meeting — if done with no waste motions it could be well ironed in three minutes; also the "jolly" way she



played Santa Claus for the W.A. Christmas party. She was a clever milliner and seamstress too and enjoyed fashioning wedding accessories until shortly before her death in 1973.

Mrs. Ben Jones would recall the trip she and Ione made to Grande Prairie in a cutter when they were both expecting babies and wanted to be in the Grande Prairie hospital for their delivery. They got as far as Wembley where Mrs. Jones' baby was born. Then Ione continued on to Grande Prairie where her baby Jack was born a week or so later.

A story Ione used to tell about herself was another 'baby' story. It seems on one occasion when her labor pains began the first symptoms were high in her chest. "Oh I know what's the matter with you," declared the hired girl, "you need a mustard plaster," and she proceeded to produce one. When she brought it to Ione, Ione said she was so disgusted she threw the thing at the cupboard — and claimed the outline was still on the cupboard door.

Fletcher was a quiet reserved home-loving man, and quite content to let Ione tell her stories. Though if he thought her story was wandering from the truth a bit he'd gently remonstrate, "Now Ione —!"

Fletcher said his wife should have married a preacher because she was always wanting to go somewhere. Folks hereabouts will remember her little red car and her indomitable determination to be independent with it — even if a few mishaps occurred now and then.

When Fletcher was in the hospital he was chatting with his nurse and inquiring about their farming. The nurse replied she thought it was hard because so much depended on the weather. "Well", said Smitty, as he was affectionately called, "I think farming is a good life — and if I had it all to do over again I'd be a farmer!"

In many respects, the Fletcher Smiths held the Hinton Trail community together in the lean years. No deserving persons were turned away from the store for want of ready money and Fletcher's optimism always made things a bit brighter. More buoyant was Ione and she was never wanting to aid a neighbor. She often referred to her "little black book" as though it contained the history of the community. Neighbors recall that once she excused herself at an afternoon tea, saying that she had to go home to cook dinner for "500 pounds of mankind". Fletcher and Lee Hicks, had, indeed, responded to good cooking. On another occasion she soft peddled any suggestion of ability on her own part with, "Fletcher brings home the bacon! All I do is cook it."

#### HAROLD SPENCE

Harold was the first white boy born in the Hinton Trail district and received his education at Craigellachie school.

In 1941 he enlisted in the army, serving overseas in the First Canadian Corp for four years. In 1947 he went to Vancouver and stayed for five years, during which time he married Olivene Mair, from Castlegar, B.C.

They moved back to the Peace River country in 1952. Harold worked as an elevator agent, moving from here to there. In January, 1955, they settled in

Beaverlodge, and while there, adopted a little boy, Kenneth.

In 1958 the family moved back to his old home at Hinton Trail, and built a house on the home farm. Quite soon afterward they adopted a little girl, Jacalyn, a sister for Ken.

Harold farmed with his brother Frank until 1971 when Frank moved to Fox Creek to live. Harold still resides on the original farm of his parents and grandparents.

Olivene has been very active in community and church affairs, acting in an official capacity in both.

#### SPURGEON SPENCE

In 1915 Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Spence, sons Ivy and Spurgeon, the latter's wife Edna, and daughter Gladys came to Tofield from Vernon, B.C. They stayed in Tofield for a year and it was there that Spurgeon and Edna had a daughter Marion, now Mrs. Ernie Sander-son of Hythe.

In March, 1916 they loaded their settlers effect in two stock cars and came to Spirit River. In March, 1917 they drove to their homesteads after loading their effects on 3 sleighs. One had a tent on it for living in, while the others carried furniture and feed for the horses. A friend, Dan Bailey, came with them to Hinton Trail.

The Spurgeon Spences settled on the N.W. 17-20-10 W.6. Ivy settled on the S.E. 19-70-10 W.6, and Dan Bailey on the S.W. 17-70-10 W.6.

During the summer a frame building was built which they all moved into in the fall, and during the winter logs were hauled to build the log houses. One still stands today.

Spurgeon and Edna lived on their homestead where three more children were born, Norma, now Mrs. Bill Connell of Beaverlodge, Harold of Hinton Trail and Frank of Fox Creek.

In 1918 Gladys was married to Fred Holborn of Vernon, B.C. They homesteaded the quarter bordering Spurgeon's.

In 1922 Dan Bailey passed away and Mr. and Mrs. Spence, Senior bought his place and lived there with son Ivy until 1925, when they moved back to Vernon. Then in March 1935 Spurgeon and Edna moved onto his folks land.

In the fall of 1936 Spurgeon took over the post office from Stan Ronksley and moved it to his land where it remained until 1952. Then they built a small home on the Hinton Trail corner and again moved the post office, while Frank and Harold took over the farm. Spurgeon ran the post office until 1961, when he gave it up in favor of Bob Dunbar.

In later years Spurgeon's wood pile became a landmark. This was his hobby and his remedy for keeping young. They lived on the corner until 1973, when they moved into the Beaverlodge Senior Citizens' apartments.

#### WILMONT SWITZER STORY

In August, 1926 I left Ontario to come west to harvest in Saskatchewan with two friends, Ben and Leonard Jones. At that time we had no thoughts of the Peace River country and homesteading, but my two friends wanted me to come and spend the winter with

them in the Peace. I wasn't old enough to file on a homestead so Ben filed by proxy for me after I had been there two weeks. So homesteading I went!

There were more single men than married in those days but with married and young folks together we really had good times at picnics in the summer and house parties in the winter, which would include dancing to our own music by local talent.

Someone with a team and sleigh would make the rounds and pick up a load and take them to the dance, sometimes it might be a four-up on a grain tank. There was just as much fun coming and going as at the dances.

I was on the homestead until the depression hit in the 1930's, when wheat was 25¢ and oats 10¢ a bushel.

In 1935 I had a sale and left Hinton Trail. I rented my place to Vic and Violet McKay and they farmed it for the next ten years, then they bought the land but to this day it is known as the Switzer place. It is located in about the centre of the district, six miles directly south of Halcourt. In summing up, taking the good with the bad I really enjoyed myself while I was there; I'll never regret the time and effort I spent at Hinton Trail.

#### ALEX THOMPSON

I left Aberdeen, Scotland in the spring of 1912 and came to Glenside, Saskatchewan where my two brothers lived. I worked there for three years. Then with my brother Bill, and Pete and George Moir, I left for the Peace River. We travelled by train to the Smoky and had to walk from there to Grande Prairie. We landed up at Bezanson and stayed there for the winter.

I hauled freight from High Prairie to Bezanson that winter, and towards spring I bought the team I was hauling with and came out to Halcourt. We stayed in Bob Shaw's cabin. I filed on my homestead on March 7,

1916 and stayed there long enough to clear 10 acres of land. Then Bill and I went out to Edmonton. He remained there but I went back to Saskatchewan and stayed there till the fall of 1920. Then a friend of mine and I shipped a car of settlers' effects to Sexsmith. By that time Bill had returned.

In 1921 Agnes Ward came to visit her father and her brother Charlie Ward. In 1922 Agnes and I were married by the Rev. Mr. Forbes in the manse at Grande Prairie. We have four living children, all boys. Bill, the oldest, is married and lives at Hythe, Alberta. Bud is at Terrace, B.C., Walter at Shalath and David is at Prince George, B.C.

We lived on the farm till 1954. Then we moved to Chilliwack, B.C. We celebrated our Golden Wedding there in September, 1972.



Alex (L) and Bill Thompson (R) and friends.

Mrs. Henry Lock visiting Mrs. Alex Thompson, 1929.





## BILL THOMPSON

I, Bill Thompson, came from Aberdeenshire, Scotland, to Glenside, Saskatchewan in March, 1913, where three brothers were living. I worked there until the fall of 1915, when my brother, Alex and I, with two other cousins, George and Peter Moir, decided we would go to the Peace River country and take up homesteads. George filed on the George Ingledew quarter, and Peter on the Scorgie place. Later, Peter was killed in action overseas.

We stayed in Bezanson during the winter of 1915 and came to the Halcourt district in the spring and I filed on the S.W. 13-70-11. That same spring, we returned to Saskatchewan and continued working on the farm until the fall of 1919, when I came back to live on the homestead.

That was a long, cold winter, with lots of snow. I went out several summers with Dan Bailey and his bridge crew, as cook, and worked at Buffalo Lakes lumber camps in the winter. Money was scarce. Eventually, I got some horses with which to clear and break up some land. What grain we grew had to be hauled to Wembley, then the end of the railroad.

As the country became settled and the railway reached Beaverlodge, life was easier. As times got better, it was tractor farming and better machinery with which to farm. I farmed at Hinton Trail until the spring of 1954, when I sold the farm to Jack Ray, who at that time was operating the Hinton Trail store. I moved to Chilliwack, B.C. and retired.

While the poverty years will be remembered, homesteading days had many good times to recall. There were parties and dances, and eventually, with the cooperation of the neighborhood, the hall was built at Hinton Trail.

There were many bachelors in the Hinton Trail district but the community rated Bill Thompson "tops" for his clean, attractive abode.

## SOME OTHER SETTLERS

Charlie Brown came to Hinton Trail during the thirties and owned land along the banks of the Red Willow. He was a married man, with a family of two. He later

sold his land to the Elsander Brothers and moved to Edmonton.

Melvin Sutton was a close neighbour of Charlie Brown and a married man with five or six in his family. He worked for neighbouring farmers during harvest and spring. His land became part of the Elsander farm. He started the first store at Hinton Trail. They moved to Dawson Creek during World War II.

Henry Smith came from Delburne, Alberta with the Kennedys in 1928. He was a middle-aged man and owned a quarter of land later farmed by Foster Wartenbe.

Frank Nyblad, a single man and veteran of the Second World War settled near the forks of the Red Willow and Wapiti rivers for a short period.

George Goertzen came to Hinton Trail as a young man. His parents lived north of Beaverlodge. He sold his land to George Elsander and later married and settled near Lacombe, Alberta.

Bushkeel Brothers came from Europe after the Second World War. One was a correspondent and settled near the Wapiti for a short while.

John Durda and his wife Florence had a family of four. He built up a very good place. John was overtaken by poor health. The boys carried on for a while and they eventually all moved to Grande Prairie.

Paul Kempton came to the district before the twenties with two brothers and a friend, Jack Lee. He filed on land, proved up, sold out and returned to eastern Canada. Some years later returned and bought land. He was married on his return and stayed for a number of years, when ill health took him back east.

Martin Bickner was an early settler of the thirties and was a married man with a family of five. His wife was a teacher at Craigellachie school. Later he sold his farm to Robert Dunbar and moved to Dawson Creek.

Charlie Kenerva was a single man, first living by the Wapiti. Then he and Isaac Hill, Icelanders bought the land now owned by Robert Dunbar. They lived their later years in Beaverlodge.





# LOWER BEAVERLODGE

## LOWER BEAVERLODGE AND HUALLEN

Lower Beaverlodge and HualLEN are like the hen and the egg — you can't have one without the other. Though Jim Brooks had used the Indian camps at the ford on the Mackintosh land for a winter stopping place as early as 1898 and Bill Bernard had settled further up the Beaverlodge river by 1907 — still it wasn't until 1909 when several families of the Bull Outfit chose land south and east of the present Beaverlodge town that the district acquired a name.

In the line of progress the settlers wanted first a school, then a church, next a telephone line, then more elaborate machinery and equipment. They organized themselves to acquire these amenities. The school that was built with organized labour also became the church and the social centre for the neighbourhood. Three neighbours tied their fences together with overhead wires and the barbed-wire telephone system needed an organization, "The Lower Beaverlodge Mutual Telephone Co." to keep it in shape and help it expand. The settlers wanted flour so the Beaverlodge Industrial Co. was formed to buy machinery and to establish a flour mill. This company used their organization to bring in a Case threshing machine and later a threshing machine company was formed. A man died and the Beaverlodge cemetery was created.

The school was the first concern of the settlers. Travellers today may still view the log building that was once the hub of social activities as well as the seat of learning in the Lower Beaverlodge district. Plans

for a school began in 1910 when it was decided to petition the government to form a school district. There were children in the district who needed schooling, namely Lulu Sherk and the Walton children. Mrs. Roy Shisler tutored Lulu before arrangements were made for a classroom in one of Roy's unused homestead houses. Later Howard Henry loaned his bachelor shack for school purposes and there the Waltons — Jim, Nellie, Jessie, Louise and Kathleen and Lulu Sherk took their lessons from Mrs. Mabel Allen.

Also unregistered was an Indian boy, Sam Wilson who would come frequently to the school, slip in quietly and squat at the back of the room while classes continued, his beady eyes curiously registering all that flowed about him. At recess he would erupt outdoors ahead of the others for a game of ball, but he never learned that he was to leave the bat at home plate when he'd make a strike. Mrs. Allen's salary was \$450 per year. The next year this was increased to \$500.

William Allen, John Walton and Paul Flint were the first trustees, Paul Flint acted as secretary-treasurer. Paying a teacher involved the collecting of school taxes. The trustees had many references on their books to unpaid taxes and requests to the Department of Education for advice on how to deal with them.

In 1912 a log building was erected. Billy Johnson contracted to build the school for \$125. He and his crew, consisting of Garnet Truax and Art and Harry Lacey had the building ready for opening September, 1913, the second school in the Peace Country. Paul Flint made the desks and the Department of Education provided free readers. J. W. Wilkie was hired as the first teacher in the new school at \$600. per year with an additional \$20 for lighting fires. It is interesting to note that Mr. Wilkie asked that grounds be prepared for the pupils to plant a garden.





The Lower Beaverlodge School, 1938. Back row: Don Sherk, Gordon Boyd, Helen Stegmier, Margaret Clow, Marie Boyd, Marjorie Thoreson. Second row: Elnora Goebel, Kay Kirkpatrick, Billy Clow, Bob Coe, Marion Ja-

que, Freida Schneider, Reta Edgerton/ Evelyn Goebel, Dorothy Edgerton. Front row: Roland Goebel, Fred Stegmier, Floyd Goebel, Doreen Schneider, Myrtle Goebel. Teacher: Miss Elnora Finch.

Mr. Wilkie taught for four years. Mrs. Jim Castleman took over the duties for three and one-half years. She was an excellent teacher and taught the girls to sew and knit when it was too cold to go outside. She gave them much that they recall to this day — her kindly philosophy of living, her patience and cheerfulness.

Miss Margaret McNaught is remembered for her art classes and Miss Agnes Melsness for the singing she taught. Each week Mrs. Woods had a new piece of poetry on a blackboard that the whole school was expected to learn. It was during Mrs. Wood's reign too that there was an influx of Lutheran children into the Lower Beaverlodge school. With something like 48 pupils she was hard pressed to find seating accommodation and to keep a semblance of discipline.

Newton Grimmett gave the pupils plenty of physical exercise and the Christmas concert the year he was there featured pyramid building and gymnastics.

Mrs. McMasters had a busy six months with the pupils — it was 1927 and she and Mrs. Allen spent hours training the pupils in precision drills and patriotic songs to help celebrate Canada's Diamond Jubilee. Many of her pupils still have the Memorial medallions that were presented to each pupil that day.

The pupils romped their way through school playing shinny — which was stopped when Ken Edgerton got his nose broken — softball, basketball, Red Light, Anti-hi-over, Dare-base and Kick-the-can. Summers near the end of June the pond at Sherk's pasture used to draw truants like flies. Winter, pupils huddled about



Lower Beaverlodge Softball team—1939. Back row: Ken Edgerton, Al Truax, Gus Schneider, Homer Jaque, Vern Hawthorne, Don Sherk. Front row: Harry Sherk, Mervyn Jaque, Cliff Cassity, John Heikel, Ray Goebel, Bat Boy.



Lower Beaverlodge young people.



the big barrel stove while the teacher read "another" chapter from the story book. Or they played cat, hang-man, tic-tac-toe and other games on the blackboards.

School Fairs were a big event of the school year. All penmanship classes, art and essay classes were entered as part of school year's work. Seeds for a vegetable garden were distributed to each pupil. The extras such as weed seed collections, sheaf exhibits, wild flower collections, handicrafts, knot tying, bird houses and the preparation of the vegetables for display were left to parental supervision. At least five of the Lower Beaverlodge pupils won the coveted award of a week at the Vermilion School of Agriculture — their first taste of a trip "outside".

In a reminiscing mood several of the neighborhood



The Lower Beaverlodge School, 1924. Wilma, Della, Sarah and Beryl Eiseman, Ted, Thelma, and Lucy Thoreson, Lorne Romine, Oscar Bell, Cliff Cassity.



Off to a school picnic.



Marley and Betty Sherk's wedding. — 1932. Rev. Carr minister standing behind them.



The Lower Beaverlodge school, second school built in the Grande Prairie District.



The First Fair at Lake Saskatoon. Mr. and Mrs. Gaudin and D'Arcy, Gordon Sherk, Victor Flint, Mr. and Mrs. A. Sherk, Maud Sherk, Effie Flint, Mrs. Bert Johnson, Paul Flint.

"oldsters" were recalling the fun of their youth when they went to dances in gangs — altogether in a big grain tank, as often as not with a four-up of horses. Gaily they visited on the way to the dances, danced until three or four o'clock in the morning and sang all the way home. Another remembered the ball games and the time Cliff Cassity at one game eyed a three strand barbed wire fence and said, "By golly! I used to be able to do it!", and took a running leap in an attempt to clear the fence, ending up with a rip in the seat of his pants. Disgruntled he claimed, "I still think I can do it!" and on the second try ripped a second hole in his pants.

Still another recalled the Sunday picnics where three or four families would pool their cars and lunches and take off to such distant points as Lake Saskatoon, the Simonette, Rolla, B.C. or Dunvegan. Quite often these jaunts turned into berry picking sprees if saskatoons, raspberries or blueberries were in season.

Several winters were happily filled with producing plays — sometimes a three-act play — sometimes several shorter ones. Louise Jaque was often called upon to direct these productions.

#### IVAN ABRICOSOVICK

Little is known of Ivan except that he came into the country with Harry Raynes and had squatted on N.E. 18-71-9 in the Lower Beaverlodge district. He was a Russian and had a brother in the Russian army. He filed on his land in May 1910, took off two crops and



was gone by 1913. Some think he and Gillam and George White went out together over the Edson Trail. He was best known locally by the name of Appracozy.

#### THE HUGH ALLEN STORY — by Madelon Truax

In 1966 Hugh Wright Allen was nominated to the Alberta Agricultural Hall of Fame by his neighbors. At that time he was invited by the Alberta Government to submit a sketch of his life for their files. The following story is in his own words.

"My father, William Allen was born on Amherst Island, the son of Edward Allen who had migrated from County Down early in the 19th century and who probably chose Amherst Island because he was a sailor by choice, rather than a farmer.

My mother's people, the Wrights were of Scottish origin and not farmers. Her father operated a general store and his sons followed in his footsteps.

On the Island there were only public schools. When I was ready for High School I went to Kingston to live with a widowed aunt who had a son my age. The fall of 1902 I entered Kingston Collegiate Institute.

I registered in the teacher's course and graduated four years later with honors. I had nothing definite in mind as a career but one of my teachers told me he could give me a recommendation for work with a chemical manufacturing company. I decided to try it and moved to Tweed, Ontario.

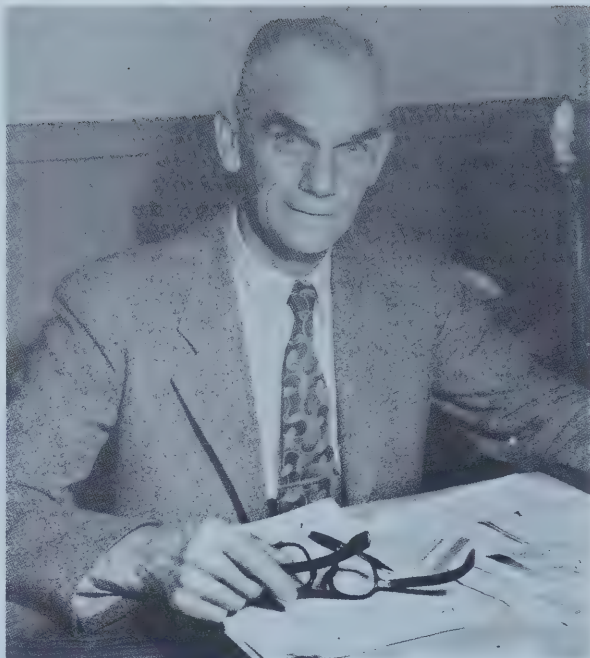
During the years I worked in Tweed there was a great deal of publicity being given by the press and the Federal Government to the opportunities that were open to settlers to occupy and develop the farm lands of the Prairie Provinces.

A number of men I knew had gone west and established themselves. Among them was a young couple I knew well, Roy Shisler and his wife. They had recently been married and I had acted as best man at their wedding. We heard from them and were tremendously interested in their description of the new country and the conditions under which they were living. The Shislars had gone to Beaverlodge, Alberta as part of a group known locally as the Bull Outfit.

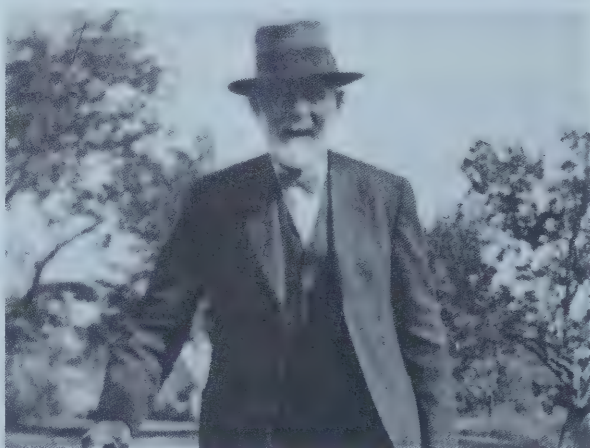
The company for which I was working decided to sell out to another company. If I was to remain their employee I would have to move to Montreal. Now was the time to decide about a change. The question of going west to farm was furthered by persuasion from Roy Shisler's sister and her husband Walter Rebstock. They had decided to try it and wanted us to go with them. After much discussion my mother and father decided to go too.

On January 11, 1911 Mabel Sills and I were married and proceeded to Edmonton on our honeymoon. Father couldn't arrange the disposal of his property so quickly and decided to follow us later in the summer.

After arriving in Edmonton the next two or three weeks were spent in buying supplies and equipment. We set out with two teams of oxen and one team of horses for Peace River by way of Athabasca and Lesser Slave Lake. There were five in our party, Walter Rebstock and his wife; Francis Sills, my wife's sister, and my wife and I. Fortunately our livestock was in good shape and familiar with their work. We were surprised to find so many regular freighters driv-



Hon. Hugh Allen, 1930-1935. Minister of Lands and Mines, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Provincial Director of Relief. Also President of Alberta Livestock Co-operative Ltd. from 1940-1965 and Director of U.G.G. from 1946-1965.



William Allen.



Mrs. Mabel Allen.

ing horses on the road and homesteaders with oxen going out to Edmonton for food and supplies. As we passed through Grouard we filed on land adjacent to our relatives, on their advice. This was the only land office north of Edmonton.

We were on the road from the last of January until sometime in March, and although there were cold periods we suffered no particular hardships. We arrived at Lake Saskatoon early in March. A few days previous to this we had been overtaken by Amos Sherk, a relative of Walter Rebstock and we travelled the last ten days in his company to the Sherk home. There we were warmly received and given every assistance in establishing living quarters.

Our first activity was to get material for houses, fire-killed spruce which provided ideal building logs. Before the snow was gone we had hauled out enough for three buildings.

In the spring we were well pleased with our land and made no change from our original selection. I had filed on land by proxy for my father, next to my own. Some years later I bought two adjacent quarters and later still both my father and I filed on second homesteads south of our original ones. Our homesteads were 75 per cent clear of bush so cultivation was easily commenced. It's a curious fact that in the early homesteading days there were more people on the land than in later years — almost one family per quarter.

Hired help was good, easy to come by and wages not too high. Big jobs such as sawing wood and threshing were a community effort, neighboring farmers working together to help one another.

Roads and schools were the first demand and the community-minded people soon met this need. The first school in the Grande Prairie area was built in 1910 at Beaverlodge with Mrs. Chester Drake as teacher. The second school was built at Lower Beaverlodge in 1913 and my wife was the first teacher. Telephones were the next utility sought. The homesteaders bought their telephones from the government and used the barbed wire fences already strung on fence posts for dual purpose. There were few farmers who at some time or other didn't get the familiar message, 'The telephone is dead! Tend your fence.'

After the first World War, newcomers to Canada from the United States and Europe had little knowledge of, and no interest in Canadian political affairs of the past. They looked with favor on the building of a political set-up based on the agricultural economy of the province and so the United Farmers of Alberta came into being. In 1920 I was president of the Beaverlodge branch of the U.F.A. — one of the more aggressive groups in the north. There were many level headed men of ability in the organization so when the first post-war election was held in 1921 the movement supported by the farm bodies was elected. This U.F.A. Government carried on for 14 years.

It so happened I had taken an active part in the farm organization, both in the political aspects and in the formation of the co-operative marketing bodies. When I was offered the provincial nomination for the Peace River constituency I accepted and was elected.

In 1930, Peace River and Grande Prairie split into two constituencies and I was elected by acclamation to the Grande Prairie end. In 1934 I was appointed Minister of Lands and Mines and Minister of Municipal Affairs. I was also Provincial Director of Relief and remained in these offices until the defeat of the U.F.A. Government in 1935.

It was while I was a member of the legislature that I worked long and hard to influence the government into providing some sort of Peace River outlet so that freight costs would not strap the farmer, the lumber man and the miner. I still hope to see that day.

Around 1940 I took an active part in the organization of the Alberta Livestock Co-operative Ltd., and was president of that body for some years and a member of the board until June 1965. I was also a director of the Grande Prairie Co-op Livestock Marketing Association, operating out of Sexsmith, Alberta.

In 1946 I was appointed to the board of directors of the United Grain Growers Ltd. and remained on it until I sold my farm in 1964 and moved to Grande Prairie.

It has been a great privilege to live in this part of Canada during the time of its development and to be in contact with the people who settled it — and brought it into production. There were many surprises and disappointments. Time and again the region was condemned as being fit only for the buffalo and the coyote, and the former was generally congratulated on having the sense to move out.

Agriculture alone would have provided a slow and painful method of developing the Peace River country — even with the assistance of the vast timber resources that lay around it. But all that has been changed by the oil and other mineral discoveries of recent years. It would be a bold man indeed who declared the Peace River district had reached the end of its possibilities."

This is the Hugh Allen story as he himself told it. Let us regress to pick up the story of his family. In the summer of 1912 Hugh met his mother and father in Edmonton. They made the trip with team and wagon over the long trail. Hugh had built his folks a cozy log home before their arrival so they were among the very few early settlers who had a home ready at journey's end.

Mr. William Allen was 60 years old when he came north. He was constantly afflicted with pain and limped about his chores with a cane in one hand and a pail in the other. A game old gentleman, he did his share of the work but he just couldn't get down onto a milking stool. The pigs pleased his Irish heart and many were the hours he spent cooking "spuds," barley and chop into a warm mash for his prize pigs.

It was around the big cooking pot that he would hold forth on politics to anyone he could corner. An ardent student of history, Mr. Allen could quote word for word whole paragraphs from the speeches of Thomas Darcy McGee and Sir John A. Macdonald. In fact he claimed that the only place his sod roof didn't leak was over his picture of Sir John A! He was a staunch Conservative, following the political issues of the day with avid enthusiasm. Mr. Allen was also concerned about the morals of Hugh's hired men and lectured



them about their slothful ways and "lack of foresight."

When very young, two of Mr. and Mrs. Allen's neighbor girls visited them regularly each Sunday. One of them tells how, as they came over the rise behind the Allen's barn, she would crow like a rooster. If Mr. Allen was in the yard he would reply with an answering crow.

Whilst Mr. Allen would tease the girls and regale them with stories, Mrs. Allen would be quietly setting out cookies and milk. Later she would open her treasure chest to the little girls' delight — a kewpie doll, a tiny deck of cards, a game of Flags, a big ball of precious string, her knitting needles, her buttons, a little chest with intriguing compartments. Always a box of humbugs, the rarest treat of all.

Being elderly when they came to this country, Mr. and Mrs. Allen were not as active in the community as Hugh and Mabel. Mr. Allen served as one of the first trustees of the school. They could both be counted on to be in their places at Sunday services, community concerts, picnics or political rallies.

Mr. Allen died in November 1932 and Mrs. Allen lived with Hugh and his wife until her death in 1945.

Hugh's wife, Mabel Sills was born in Tweed, Ontario, daughter of Jane Clarke and Wilson Sills. The Sills families of Belleville and Tweed came from United Empire Loyalist stock and were considered leaders in agriculture, trade and construction in their districts.

After finishing high school in Tweed, Mabel took teacher training at Belleville and followed this career until her marriage to Hugh in 1911. Mabel was something of an artist in her own right and the home she created for her husband reflected her artistic ability.

The first year the Allens were on their homestead, Mabel taught school in the Lower Beaverlodge area in the home of her brother-in-law, Roy Shisler and then in Howard Henry's house. When the school was built in 1913, Mr. Drake taught but Mabel's musical talents were still much in demand for all school events as well as at the church services.

Life was not all drudgery in those days. People still recall the debating clubs, the literary club and the baseball games — all of which the Allens enjoyed. Hugh was the pitcher for a baseball team that was so sophisticated they even had uniforms. One neighbor tells that when Hugh umpired a game there was never a dissenting voice about his decisions.

As a child I was an inmate of the Allen household — going to school from their place for the first two years of my schooling. Mr. Allen dubbed me "Maddie Allen". As part of the "family" (Mabel and Hugh had no children of their own) I recall my aunt and uncle as a very compatible couple. Uncle Hugh was very fond of making candy, and next best to candy was a juicy Mackintosh apple to munch while reading the evening paper. Auntie Mab had a light hand with a cake and a memory of her bread can still make my mouth water.

While Uncle Hugh was off on Provincial or livestock business, Auntie Mab kept the home fires burning and the hired men fed. When Uncle Hugh

brought unexpected callers to the dinner table she was always a warm and gracious hostess. She went to Edmonton with him in the winter when the Legislature was sitting. Her health was never the best and many operations drained her of much of her vitality. She passed away in 1956.

In 1958 Uncle Hugh married widow Lulu Sherk Edgerton. In 1965 he sold his farm to Victor Kuechle and moved to Grande Prairie.

The Allen story wouldn't be complete without a few characteristic comments. One from among his neighbors was "There's only one way to do things and that's Hugh's way." Another, "Hugh Allen was honest to a fault." A newspaper correspondent said of him — "Inland Empire Builder — one of Alberta's greatest leaders and one of the Peace Country's notable citizens; world traveller, statesman, stockman and farmer — a man of rare intellectual energy." When invited into the Provincial Cabinet as Minister of two portfolios the Edmonton Journal read: "His careful intensive study of governmental affairs and economics has eminently fitted him to become an important factor in the affairs of Alberta."

This Builder of the Peace died in 1972 at the age of 83 leaving his widow Lulu and two nieces to mourn his passing.

#### THE BELL STORY — by Oscar Bell

My father, Wesley Bell, was an adventurer and when he heard that very soon there would be a railroad built from Edmonton to Grande Prairie, he decided to have a look at the Peace River country.

About 1913, he left his stony farm near Collingwood, Ontario, went by train to Edson, Alberta, and walked the Edson Trail to file on a homestead in the northeast corner of the Lower Beaverlodge area. Then he walked out, his food consisting mainly of rolled oats which he carried in a pack sack, and cooked beside the trail. If he found a berry patch, he had dessert.

In the spring of 1916, he heard that the railroad was to be completed to Grande Prairie, so he left the farm in the care of his son John and started west again.

The railroad was not quite finished when he arrived at Clairmont, so he stayed on the train. As the tracks were laid the train moved ahead until it reached Grande Prairie where there was a big celebration.

After reaching his homestead he built a small sod hut, then spent a month clearing burnt timber off eight acres of land which had been burned over.

He once again returned to Ontario, sold his stony 50 acres, said good-bye to his brother, Wright, and left for the West.

In October, 1917, my mother Nancy, my sister Chelesta, one year old, my older brother John, 17, and myself, entrained from Collingwood for Grande Prairie. My father and my brother, George, had gone ahead with a carload of livestock and implements. It took them three weeks to get to Grande Prairie. Then they moved everything out to a homestead owned by Billy Blair, which cornered my father's homestead. Billy was kind enough to let us use his granary to live in and his stable for our livestock for the first winter. That winter we built a log house and stable of our own.

The next spring John filed on a homestead across the road from my father.

My father broke the ground he had cleared before and sowed wheat. We got 40 bushels to the acre, even though there were lots of stumps in the field. We stacked the crop near the stable and it was very late before we could get a threshing machine to come in. I remember that the threshers used a portable steam engine drawn by four of the biggest oxen I had ever seen. They had knobs on the ends of their horns and they wore collars that looked like horse collars upside down. They also used four horses to draw the separator. There was a hill just before they got to the stacks and those oxen got right down and lugged the steamer up it.

The next day they were threshing and stopped for dinner. After dinner, the men went outside and stretched out on the grass for a rest, and I remember one of them saying, "Here it is the first part of December and we can lie on the grass in Alberta."

When the Lower Beaverlodge school was built I had four miles to go to school. Walking was out of the question and I could only go if the weather was good. I got on quite well but I missed a lot of work. I rode bare-back and carried a sheaf of oats in a grain sack over the horse's shoulders. The next winter my sister started school so I drove the horse and cutter but if the snow was too deep, we stayed home. In the summer we used a buggy.

In those early days, bear and deer were very common sights, especially black and brown bear. I remember that when we moved into our own house, it was not uncommon to lie in bed and hear the call of the bull moose close by.

I recall a happening in our family in the summer of 1918. My mother had baked a cake and put it in the kitchen cabinet, then she and dad went out for a while. It was the mid-afternoon and a hen cackled and came from under the granary where we were still living at the time. I, being the smallest, was sent under the floor to get the egg. I got it and was on my way out when I heard a shot and saw two excited brothers come running out the door. They told me that a hawk had swooped down on a chicken out by the stable and George had grabbed the thirty-two rifle and was running to the door when the gun went off. The bullet went through the cupboard door. When we ate the cake that night for supper, we found the bullet in the icing.

Teddy Thoreson and I were always very close friends. I spent a lot of time at the Thoreson's. Ted's mother was a wonderful person.

I remember when the radio first came to Lake Saskatoon. The storekeeper had one set up in the back of his store and my dad asked him if I could see and hear it. The storekeeper said, "Sure, have him come in tonight." In those days, a radio would only work at night and it was seven miles to Lake Saskatoon. Teddy and I rode to the store and were shown the amazing box that had music and voices coming out of it. The box was about two feet long and ten inches high and had three dials, a switch and a volume control. Behind it sat a six volt battery, two "B" batteries, a "C" battery and two sets of headphones. The storekeeper

said it was about time to hear something on it, so he put on the headphones and started turning the dials. Soon it started to squeal. When it stopped, he put them on us and he went on with his duties around the store. We listened to western music from Calgary and Vancouver stations. At times it was quite clear. After some two hours we returned home.

Prairie fires were common and dangerous, and also very costly to those who only had a very small acreage cropped. I recall in 1921 John had about 20 acres of wheat and when it was ripe a fire started at the edge of a swamp, crossed a small piece of prairie grass and was in his field almost before he saw it. Three men were working nearby and they threw a plow on the wagon and raced the horses to the fire. It was crossing to the wheat field, so they ploughed through the middle and saved half the field. That fire had originated from a smoldering fire which had been burning in a type of peat for about two years. My brother knew it was there and had gone several times with a shovel and dug out all the fire he could find. Going back a month later he would find it burning as vigorously as ever. It needed only a high wind to start a prairie fire from a spot like that.

I left school in November 1924 and my parents, my sister and myself left on the train from Wembley next spring. John and George stayed behind to farm. We went to Yoncalla, Oregon, U.S.A., where we lived until June 1933. We then returned to Ontario where I learned to be a barber. I married and barbered there about 40 years and am now retired.

Of those early days I remember that a homesteader's life was a hard one. The neighbours were all fine people. I am glad that I had a chance to have a part in building the Peace River country, even though it was a small part.

#### **WILLIAM AND BERTHA BERNARD**

The first permanent homesteader in the Beaverlodge Valley was William N. Bernard. Of part Cherokee ancestry, he was born in Minnesota but raised in Dakota, later moving to Portland, Oregon. In 1907 he made a scouting trip to the Peace River country, coming as far as the Natinaw Hill on the Spirit River Trail. From this vantage point he could get a glimpse of the vast area to the south and west and was so impressed that he returned to Edmonton for a team and wagon and supplies. Arriving back that fall, he looked around well before squatting along the Beaverlodge river on land that was surveyed in 1909 as NE 13-70-10-W6th and SE 24-70-10-W6th.

After putting up buildings that fall, Bill returned to Portland, and subsequently made three more trips there and back before settling permanently on the Beaverlodge river in 1914. Henry Patterson, another 1907 squatter, broke five acres on each parcel of land for Bill in 1908. His first crop was seeded in 1909 with oats purchased from Bill Smith of Bear Creek for \$1.50 per bushel. The oats were sown by hand and dragged in with a brush harrow.

Bill's family life was a bit checkered. It seems he divorced his first wife, married a second who died, then found still a third wife, whom he brought to Beaverlodge. They had a son Gordon Leroy. She tired



of frontier life and departed with the child. They were divorced and he later went to Portland and remarried his first wife Bertha.

Bill had a brother Roy who came to live with him about the time Bertha arrived here. He filed on land west of Bill's and probably proved it up as he was here four years before he'd had enough of farming and left the country.

Bill and Bertha had no children but she returned to the States and found Gordon in poor health and brought him to Beaverlodge to raise as her own. He attended the Lower Beaverlodge school and later became a truck driver. He was last known to be in Edmonton.

Beaverlodge will long remember Bertha Bernard. She was a good neighbor and willing midwife, kindly to all and often brought joy to bachelor neighbors with gifts of jams and jellies.

One neighbor recalls how grateful she was when her husband and daughter had pneumonia and Mrs. Bernard and Nellie, her old white horse came everyday to nurse and cheer them. She had a 'way' to soothe the men that their wives just couldn't emulate.

Mrs. Bernard was a real source of information too, keeping her ear to the local grapevine quite consistently. But folks just chuckled about her "stories" and called her a "good old scout".

Bertha raised turkeys in great numbers. Neighbors remember years when they used to go to her place for the "turkey kill," to help pick them. In later years this practise became more of a co-operative affair where the turkeys were taken to Beaverlodge and a "bee" formed to kill, pluck and ship them out.

Bertha claimed she was afraid Bill would disown her in his will so she used her own private means to purchase land. However she trusted Bill enough to 'allow' him to put in the crop and harvest it for her. Their family finances were openly discussed with any willing listener getting the full benefit of both sides of the issue.

Bill and Bertha Bernard.



Like her husband, Bertha was a shrewd dealer. In the early days of her life on the river she decided to trap enough beavers for a coat. This was against the law but this did not deter her. A policeman called to investigate a rumor that she was poaching and found an hospitable wife ready for a friendly chat and cup of tea. Great would have been his embarrassment had he known that the soft cushion of the chair in which she sat him was her loot of beaver pelts. She told the story afterwards with much delight at having bested him.

Bertha always put great store by her birthday and would "put on a great spread." Her birthday was the same day as Winston Churchill's so she sent him a card one year and was "tickled" to receive one in return.

Gordon married Bernice Grubb and they lived on his mother's land for several years. When he went trucking, Bernice and the three children moved in town to live. The children went to school there and when Bill and Bertha moved to town to retire Grandma practically raised their oldest girl Beverly as Bev liked to be with her grandmother so much. Bill died in 1946 and Bertha in 1953.

#### JOHN AND BILLY BLAIR — by Madelon Truax

I had a delightful evening with John and Billy Blair at Pioneer Lodge. John says he is 80 years old and Bill is three years older but two gayer chaps it would be hard to find. Both spry, dapper and witty — it was a pleasure to talk to them.

It was hard to pin them down to any hard facts but I did discover that they are Canadians — both their mother and father having been born in Ontario — as they were too. Their folks died when they were in their early teens and Bill struck out on his own in 1906. John went to Kenora for two or three years to live with an uncle. Then, he too came west in search of his brother.

Among other things Bill worked on the Grand Trunk Railway when it was being built over the Yellowhead Pass using mules and scrapers. He claims he was with the first outfit over the summit.

Another time he was working for a railway construction company from Vancouver down the south coast. When they hit Seattle so did the "Big Bust" the money panic of 1907 when all the banks closed. Bill said, "Seattle was a wild burg then! All the mines had shut down and the miners flocked into town. Oh boy! Whatta rumpus — murders, brawls, man-on-man. Everyone going to the bank — miners, managers, tin-horns, riff-raff, and decent citizens. People went from riches to rags that day for sure!"

Bill cooked for his crew and wishes he had some of those sourdough pancakes now. "No man ever turned 'em down," he said. He told how he would set his sourdough bread at night, mix in the flour and wrap it up in a blanket, set it on an apple box and put a lighted lantern inside. By morning it would be ready to punch down for the evening meal.

In 1911, Bill decided he had had enough of railroading. He wanted to be his own boss. He bought a team of oxen and drove in alone over the Athabasca Trail — with his dog, his frying pan and his sourdough for company. Bill has always been a loner, never married but has kept a shipshape establishment. He



homesteaded in the Lower Beaverlodge area. At the "Y" in the road in the Two Rivers District where the Old Indian Trail split, one going west to the Rockies, the other north to Fort St. John, Bill built a trapper's cabin complete with bunk and fireplace — neat and tidy as a pin.

Bill lived with old Pat Patterson one winter until he could build his own cabin on the homestead. He chose a site where he could see the mountains. He forecasted the weather from the haze — or lack of it — on the Rockies. John says today the weatherman gets his daily forecasts from Bill. Bill "knows" that weather affects people's dispositions; he is always depressed before a storm and can "feel" when one is brewing. Both Bill and John were great trappers.

While Bill was knocking around, John had found his own thing to do — trapping! He claims his trapping was more profitable than farming. He also worked for the Forestry Division out of Edson. Then for several years he drove the first mail outfit for Caywood and Robb out of Edson to Peace River. He also hauled food and supplies to the stopping places along that route.

And all the while John was inquiring for the whereabouts of brother Bill. Bill said once that when in Yellowhead country he heard his brother was looking for him but they never met. Then in 1917, John came to Lake Saskatoon making his usual inquiries. He was told, "Bill Blair? Sure he's just over there — maybe ten miles!" When John finally caught up to Bill, Bill didn't recognize him.

John didn't homestead. Instead he bought a quarter because Bill wanted it and couldn't afford it. Then he himself farmed it for awhile but preferred trapping. So he rented the farm and finally in his old age sold it to his fishing buddy, Melvin Hart. When asked if he had made a good living with his trapping he replied, "Really good — no kick, no kick!"

John has been in Pioneer Lodge for three and a half years. Bill has the present distinction of having the longest term of residence there. When we said good-night to them, Bill came to the door-step with us for one last look at the moon and the weather before retiring for the night.

#### **FRANK AND FLORA BOYD AND FAMILY**

Frank Boyd left Quebec in 1911 with his wife and infant son Stanley to examine the lumbering prospects on the West Coast. He had been managing a lumber camp for his brother-in-law in Quebec and felt he was ready to establish his own business. After two years at the coast he decided to join the rest of the family at Lake Saskatoon. Little Helen, the new baby, was only three months old.

In 1913 they arrived in the Lower Beaverlodge district and filed on S.E. 20-71-9, just north of Ken Edgerton's building site. When he had proven this up he moved to Lake Saskatoon and lived on George Thornton's place in 1917. Then he traded his land to Henry Patterson, "Ol' Pat", for S.W. 29-71-9. Here the rest of his eleven children were born: Charlie, Pearl, Ruth, Roy, Doris (Toots), Murray, Jean, Bunny and Babe. From this new location they dealt at the trading post in Lake Saskatoon. When of school age the children drove

a covered van to school, young Stan being the teamster.

When twelve years old, unbeknownst to his father, young Stan used to deliver his charges to the schoolhouse door, then take the team off to skid logs for Stan Barley during school hours. At four o'clock he would be back at the school door to pick up his family.

When Wembley became the end of steel, Lake Saskatoon merchants moved to Wembley. Now the Boyd children were much closer to school.

Flora Boyd was the typical homemaker. Her girls remember her ability to cope with her large family and the endless meals they prepared and shared with so many passers-by. Their father loved to invite visitors to the table and the news they brought enlivened their days.

In 1938 Flora died and a couple of years later Frank left the farm and moved to Fort St. John to be near his family. Helen and Bunny have married men in the lumber industry.

Pearl married Bill Donaldson, a farmer in the Bear Lake area, a good man and one who spent quite a few years as a director of the U.G.G. They had one daughter.

Charlie is cruising lumber for the Fort St. John Lumber Co., is married and has three children. Ruth is also married, has no children. She is Mrs. Frank Morrison. Roy married Beryl Purvis, has one boy and six girls. Doris (Toots) married Jack Miller and they have four girls and three boys. Bunny married Billy Robertson, lives at Chetwynd and has seven children. Babe is Mrs. John Koenig, mother of two and lives in Hudson Hope. Murray and Faye are at Fort St. John with a family of five. Jean married George Alexander, has one girl and lives in California. Stan and wife Louise have no children.

Frank died in 1963.

#### **HOLMES AND CLARA BOYD**

The Boyds came to the Lower Beaverlodge district from a cattle ranch at Egg Lake. Holmes was quite a cowboy and liked to break horses. He was very proud of his saddle and kept it in good condition. He was a happy-go-lucky chap, care-free, always ready for a joke and had a hearty laugh. One day Holmes told a little visitor if she'd take off her stockings and run out to the ice house she'd find two little white calves behind her. The little girl nearly cried when she found the calves were her own two legs.

Holmes told Clarence Grubb one day, "With your big ideas and my taste we should be millionaires".

Mrs. Boyd was a good-hearted, big-bosomed lady whom all the children loved — probably because she loved them. When she and Holmes had no children of their own they adopted Gordon and Marie.

The Boyds were good sports and good neighbours, took part in all the neighbourhood activities and provided many hungry bachelors with good home cooked meals. Some of us recall how Mrs. Boyd disliked dish-washing and hoped she could get a dishwasher. She belonged to the W.I. and U.F.W.A. and can be remembered at quilting bees and basketry workshops in the district.

The Boyds left here in the war years and went to



Kelowna, B.C. as Holmes' health was poor. They had a chicken ranch there for years but Holmes' asthma got so bad they had to give that up too. Holmes died in 1972.

Gordon is married and lives in Calgary. Marie's husband is in the oil business and they have lived in Houston, Texas, the Middle East and Venezuela. Mrs. Boyd is still in Kelowna.

## HARRY AND RUTH BRUELS

Harry Bruels was born in Toronto, Ontario, in 1884 of Pennsylvania Dutch and English parentage. His maternal grandfather, George Flint, encouraged him to come West.

In 1901, at the age of 17, Harry arrived by train in Lethbridge, Alberta. While walking from the station to the business area, he noticed a man painting a large building and remarked, "I see you are working alone. Don't you need help?" And so he had his first job.

News of the Frank Slide in the Rocky Mountains shocked the world the day after Harry finished painting. He caught a ride on a railway flat-car with many others, to view the disaster. He remembers seeing twenty men come out of the mine alive, and the hysteria when they realized what had happened to their families and homes.

That winter Harry worked in a hotel dining room at Michel, a coal mining town, and by spring had enough money to buy a team of horses and a wagon. He took orders from the miners for milk, meat and groceries and had them shipped in, then he delivered them door-to-door. He also did painting, carpentry — "any job two hands can do" as he put it, never asking how much the pay would be, only expecting that the harder he worked the more he would get.

In 1904 he chose three homesteads near Carbon, about fifty miles from Calgary, for himself, his brother Charlie, and his father. He and Charlie proved up but their father returned to Ontario.

Ruth Mayo was the young teacher at a nearby school who attended the district card parties and dances. In a draw for partners at one of the card parties, she and Harry met. They arranged to win or lose as necessary to be at the same tables throughout the evening. This was the beginning of many evenings of cards that they were to share in their lifetimes.

In 1928 Harry came to Beaverlodge where his uncle, Paul Flint, and cousins George and Victor Flint, lived. He liked the country and arranged to buy George's land, adjacent to Victor's. In the following years he and Victor worked their land together. Harry shipped in a carload of effects, including a McCormick Deering tractor, one of the first in the district. By buying a few acres of hilltop land from Charlie Edgerton, the Bruels had a lovely site for their new house, with a spring nearby. The house was one of the first and finest frame houses in the district.

Although the Bruels had no family, many were the rollicking sing-songs and dances held around their piano. They loved to entertain and were soon caught up in the growing social life of both the district and the village of Beaverlodge. Many ladies will recall being caught in a rain storm after attending a tea and bridge at the Bruels' farm, and having to walk part way home

in their bare feet. But they didn't seem to mind — it was all fun.

Ruth became involved in the Ladies' Aid, which was formed to help the struggling new United Church in Beaverlodge. She was a tireless worker for any cause she championed. Harry loved to golf and it was he who instigated the forming of the first golf club the town had known. It was a nine-hole course laid out on the rolling hillside of Victor Flint's farm, complete with natural hazards — a spring, "sink hole", pond, bluffs, a Holstein bull and cow pies.

Much as he enjoyed country life, Harry found that first the chickens, then the pig feed were giving him asthma so badly that he had to hire help with the farming. Later he rented his land, then sold out. In the meantime he carried on with carpentry and painting.

After trying several locales for asthmatic relief, they settled in White Rock, B.C., where Harry continued with carpentry. He bought vacant lots and built houses on them for sale. Then he bought older houses, repaired them and sold them. Again the bridge parties were organized and Ruth became one of the experts in southern British Columbia and northwest Washington. She also became greatly involved with a new hospital in White Rock. Harry donated six months labour to its erection, while Ruth ran a Thrift Shop to raise funds for furnishings and supplies.

In 1971 she died after a short illness, and Harry, at age 89, is confined to a wheel chair with arthritis in the Berkeley wing of the hospital he helped build. Last year the hospital voted him "Sportsman of the Year".

## HENRY BUCKLOW

The story of Henry Bucklow reads like a chapter from a Wild West Romance. He came in 1912 with John Walton on one of Walton's many trips to Edmonton for supplies and freight. Henry was a gun-toting cow-puncher "with a heart as big as all outdoors" and a flair for spinning yarns. Only it turned out that the yarns he spun were mostly true. He was also something of a veterinarian and much in demand all over the country.

Henry was a married man of 45 when he came here from the States. He had married a widow with a family and the oldest boy was jealous of Henry taking his father's place. Bucklow knew that hatred was smoldering in the boy and feared they'd have to have a showdown. It wasn't until he caught sight of the boy cleaning his gun that he realized what the show-down would mean. Knowing that he could easily out-shoot the boy he went to his wife and told her he was leaving to save trouble for her, and their baby girl Audrey, and the rest of the family. His wife didn't understand his motive and refused to keep in touch with him.

When Henry landed at Waltons he filed on land next to them and became their devoted friend. Kate recalls how she herself loved the man. "He was like a grandfather to me," she said. He treated her especially well as she was about the same age as his Audrey. She recalls how he used to tell them a new story every night about his past life, how he claimed he couldn't live in the States because he wasn't fast enough on the draw. Also how he wouldn't let her father shoot her kitten who was so far up in a high tree it wouldn't come



down. He said, "You'd kill Kate if you killed that cat!" So he went up the tree and brought her kitten down. She remembers Bucklow making balls for them of hair from steer hides. He'd pull the long hair from the steer's flanks when it was shedding in the spring and wet it and roll it until it was tight round ball. Then he'd cover it with bits and pieces from mocassin tops.

Times were hard in those early years and you got your food where you could. Bucklow used to trade with the Indians for moose meat until one day he caught the Indian children sliding up and down on a carcass. That ended the trading.

Henry had a heart of gold and if he suspected someone wouldn't be able to go to the Sports because of their chores he'd offer to do them for a whole week. He would do anything for anyone — and always for nothing.

When Bucklow went back to the States he kept in touch with Kate Walton. He was terribly disappointed to see his daughter Audrey's mind poisoned against him. He had been thinking of her as a sweet child like Kate. He found though that he had a niece who had T.B. so he took her to a high mountain region and cared for her in the fresh air until she was cured. In later years when he in turn needed love and care it was this niece who gave him a home and looked after him. She wrote Kate that she was so glad that Uncle Henry had received Kate's last letter as he was lying on his death bed and had known it was from her.

Bucklow's obituary read "He was a typical character from the old west — hospitable, fearless in times of danger, generous to a fault, true to his fellow-men, a good neighbor, and a man who spent the greater part of his life making others happy."

#### GEORGE WASHINGTON CAMPBELL

George Washington Campbell of Arizona, U.S.A.,

better known as "Automatic" Campbell, filed on NE 17-71-9 in 1910. He was a great trapper and ran a line between the Red Willow river and the Beaverlodge river with a wee cabin at the Forks. In fact he considered fur such a profitable business that he attempted to establish a fox farm. He made his pens and feeders and caught the wild fox but they soon dug themselves out. That was the end of the fox farm.

Campbell earned his name "Automatic" from his endless talk about guns, automatics being his favorite subject. Neighbors recall that he was strongly opinionated — his way of thinking was the right way. Nevertheless, he was a jolly person when in the mood and he too enjoyed the sociability of the "Sons of Rest".

"Automatic" Campbell used to cast longing eyes on a widow with three boys who lived in the Two Rivers district. He used to say, "Just look at all the taties they could pick."

Shortly after the failure of the fox farm he sold his land to Charlie Edgerton and moved to Lake Saskatoon where he bought and operated a pool room. About 1917 he went North and was reported drowned in the Pine River.

#### THE CLIFFORD CASSITY STORY

Clifford Cassity's father, Charlie Cassity, was born in Galena, Missouri in the year 1874. His grandfather was of Scottish descent and his mother of German. As a boy, Charlie's family were sympathetic neighbors of the famous James family, whose sons, Jesse and Frank became train robbers in retaliation for a miscarriage of justice.

Charles left home at an early age. He found work with a railway construction gang along the Mississippi. Young as he was, because he was white, he was given the job of overseer of a gang of negroes who

"Automatic" Campbell's winter catch of fur.





were hauling dirt with wagons and mules to build the road-bed. In the steamy atmosphere of the swamps he twice contracted malaria. The doctor advised him to get out of the south so he struck out for the Klondike — a young man of 24 years.

In 1898 he came as far north with the Klondikers as the Peace River country. He turned around here and went back to Seattle. There he took the steamer to the Klondike via the coast. It was this glimpse of the Peace that brought him back years later. Returning from the Klondike he took up farming in Iowa, U.S.A., before moving West to Joplin, Montana where he met and married Mae Wilson.

Mae Wilson was born in 1882 in Valley City, North Dakota. Among her ancestors were the Hedlocks, who had come to America via the Mayflower. From North Dakota, her family moved to homestead land in Montana, where she met Charles Cassity.

Charles and Mae farmed at Joplin for six years. Clifford was born there in 1914. In Joplin they talked of the country Charles had seen as a Klondiker. On the map they found a spot between the Red Willow and the Wapiti rivers which they thought would be heavenly in comparison to dry Montana. When Charles' friend, Mr. Bickford wrote him from Grande Prairie to ask his help in firing a steam engine, Charles was more than willing. In 1918 he met his friend, saw the Peace River country again, and decided to bring his family and two carloads of settlers' effects into the Beaverlodge area.

They arrived on the Prairie in 1919, but by now the piece of land at the junction of the Beaverlodge and Red Willow rivers that he'd hoped to file on was taken by Bill McGuiness. While looking around Charles worked for Jack Thompson out of Grande Prairie, and Mrs. Cassity took work as a cook at the Grande Prairie hospital, while Clifford roamed the hospital corridors.

In April, 1920 they moved to their homestead S.E. 8-71-9-W6 on the Beaverlodge river, and lived in an Indian cabin already constructed on their land. Charles continued to work for Thompson for a short time and Cliff began school at Lower Beaverlodge.

Cliff remembers from boyhood days that there had been great fishing in the Beaverlodge river. He was able to take 40 or 50 trout and grayling on a line in an hour. In 1922, a winter chinook opened the river and fish flooded on top of the ice. Cliff's father discovered this phenomenon and alerted the neighbors. With shovels and pitchforks they quickly filled a wagon box with fish; everyone going home with gunny sacks full.

Cliff also recalls how one winter an Indian appeared at their door asking for milk and eggs for his ailing child. The Cassitys gave him all he wanted. Later in the spring the same Indian returned with a joint of moose meat that the Cassitys claimed was the best they had eaten.

In 1929 they sold their effects, rented their land and moved to a farm near Picardville, Alberta. However the Peace River country still looked good to them so in 1934 they were back on their homestead. In 1937 Charles died at the age of 63, and Cliff took over the farm on his own.

Clifford was a hard worker and to make ends meet he went around the district in the winter with a portable wood-sawing machine and a portable saw-mill —



Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cassity and Cliff, 1933.

“a lot of damn hard work”. Later he bought a grain separator and did custom threshing. By 1942 he was able to build a new house, own a truck and tractor, and was ready to bring his bride, Frieda Goebel to grace his home.

Frieda Goebel was born at Stony Plain, Alberta and came as a child with her folks, the Valentine Goebels, to the Lower Beaverlodge district. When she and her sister began school they were unable to speak English, having heard only German at home. She too took all her schooling locally and in 1942 married Cliff Cassity. The neighbors remember with pleasure the fun they had preparing a sumptuous wedding dinner for them. It also turned out to be a house warming for Cliff and Frieda.

Mrs. Cassity, Senior was by this time confined to a wheelchair and lived with Cliff and Frieda in their big new house, through the bearing of their first two children. She was able and willing to help Frieda in a good many ways, teaching her many of her homemaking skills. She died in 1948, the year that the Cassity's lost their eldest daughter by a household accident. The Cassity's now have five children.

In 1956 Cliff bought the Marley Sherk land and moved into their house. He bought several more places until with his son Keith's help he was farming nine quarters of land. Keith also had two homestead quarters at Goodwin. Gradually Keith has eased out of the farming scheme and has a small fleet of trucks working out of Dawson Creek.

On the Sherk land the Cassitys built a new barn and got into registered Jersey cattle and beef cattle. Frieda's family keep her close to home but she's a hard worker, good mother and wife. She has run a small chicken industry practically single-handed for



years and kept many of her neighbors happy with birds and eggs.

The next two sons, Dennis and Mervyn are taking over the farming. Dennis is married to Carol McLauchlan and has a baby daughter. Mervyn married Nora Dombrova and they have a son. Eldon is working in Grande Prairie for Prairie Trucking and Trailer Co. and is a very promising heavy duty mechanic. Laureen is still in High School.

Along with his farming Cliff has found time to act as a school trustee for 18 consecutive years, first on the Lower Beaverlodge School Board and then on the Beaverlodge Board. He was also a member of the F.U.A., then of the N.F.U. and a director of the Beaverlodge Cemetery Co.

#### NELSON AND CLARA CLOW

Mrs. Nelson Clow, the former Clara Jeanette Wilkie, was born in Windsor Mills, Quebec. Her husband was born at Virden, Manitoba. They were married at the home of Clara's uncle, Calvin Campbell who was one of the early pioneers in the Grande Prairie area. They homesteaded for four and a half years in the Gimle district, 40 miles from a doctor, hospital or railroad.

They moved from the homestead to Clairmont where they operated a butcher shop. When the railway was extended to Wembley the Clows were there with their meat supplies. With the extension of the steel on to Hythe the little hamlet of Huallen sprang up. The Clows took up residence there in 1928 and established a general store. They had set up business in a tent while their store was being built. For 15 years they operated the post office in conjunction with the store and participated in a lot of lively activities in the community.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Clow were on the building committee when the Community Hall was being built and Mrs. Clow was one of the original hall board members. Nelson was the instigator and an ardent promoter of curling in the hamlet. They made a tennis court close by the store where they spent time when it could be spared. Nelson was the first shipping agent for the Grande Prairie Livestock Co-op and Clara was the local reporter to the Northern Tribune. She also wrote articles on economic affairs during the '30's — Technocracy being her 'thing'.

Nelson Clow is remembered as being a fine friendly out-going man, nothing was too much trouble for him. Mrs. Clow, somewhat more reserved, none-the-less met the public well, was very efficient and bent over backwards to be honest. There were subjects on which she held strong opinions and her views were usually respected. Their leaving the district left a gap.

The Clows have two children, Margaret and Bill. Margaret has a B.A. and a Masters degree in Education from U.B.C. She is presently in Calgary. Bill lives in Los Alimitos, California and is also a graduate of U.B.C. with a B.Sc. in mechanical engineering. He is at present with Carnation Milk of that city. He is married and has one daughter, Demetra aged 12.

Nelson, Clara and children left Huallen in 1943 to go to Kelowna. From that time until their retirement a few years ago, they operated a resort which they owned. Nelson found plenty of outlets there for his

curling enthusiasm and was president of the Kelowna Curling Club for two terms. The Clows celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in April 1972 and are now living in retirement in Kelowna.

#### STEVE CRAIG, BESSIE AND RUBY

Stephen L. Craig was born at Hillsboro, Texas in 1875. His home life was very strict and very religious. Steve had a powerful, strong-willed nature and the cloistered religious life was not for him. Rebellion burst from him in youthful rowdy brawls and swash-buckling manners. Stories vary on the reason for his notched ear: a bar-room brawl, a branding by the law when he was caught rustling, or going to church, the once in his lifetime, and finding the offering plate too tempting. True, or not, the fact remains, Steve was a lovable rascal, a great entertainer with his tall tales, and a good neighbor to some.

Steve's wanderlust took him to Calgary, Alberta around 1908. He worked on the ranch of Pat Burns until he could start his own ranch. From 1910-1920 he ranched at Sundre, Alberta, where he acquired his beloved horse Blucher, and married Bessie Spencer, an English governess. She, tired of England, had emigrated to Canada and tutored her way from Ontario to Saskatchewan and to Alberta in quest of excitement.

Having no family of their own, the Craigs adopted a boy, John, and moved north to Beaverlodge in 1920. Steve had formed a partnership with Jack Winters and together they brought in a herd of cattle; some say 200 head, others 400. They bought fodder along the way to feed them; some say fields of stooks, others say stacks of hay. Whichever, the stories agree they fed and moved. The winter of 1920 was a hard winter, with deep, deep snow and cold. And it had set in early. Craig and Winters ended up in the Halcourt district and wintered the cattle on the John Skolseg place, west of Art Chapmans. Feed got so scarce that Steve bargained with Russ Walker to put a board roof on Russ' barn if Russ would let him have the straw off the roof.

The Craigs' first home in Beaverlodge was the rented place of Andy Dahl. Two years later they bought Paul Flint's land, three and one-half miles southeast of Beaverlodge. They called it Spring Coulee Farm because of the soda springs at the base of the hill. Here they raised sheep and cattle, though Steve would boast he never ate his own beef.

John was with them until he was about 17 and then the wanderlust hit him too. He found employment with a railroad crew south of Edmonton. At first, he kept in touch with his mother but later his communications ceased altogether.

Bessie, the product of a well-to-do English home, was born in 1892 in Welford, England. She brought a nice touch of culture to a pioneer community. Although she disliked housework, the neighbor girls loved her when she played the piano and sang for them. She had an Englishwoman's fondness for dogs and always had one or two at her heels when calling for tea. Having her for tea called for your best china, silver and serviettes. This bit of refinement pleased her tremendously.

On one occasion Bessie and her friend, Nell Walker





Women's Institute Meeting at Craigs, 1927. Top row—Mrs. V. Flint, Mrs. G. Sherk, Mrs. F. Willsey, Mrs. Jake Stegmeier, Mrs. H. Allen, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Cassity, Mrs. Holmes Boyd. Children—Jack Willsey, Beth Flint, Don Sherk, Mrs. Nordstrom, Helen Stegmeier, Marjorie Willsey, Baby Willsey, and Gordon Boyd.

wanted to go to town but no man was available to harness their horse. Undaunted, they harnessed and hitched it to the buggy as had been pictured in Eaton's catalogue!

In the late twenties, the log house, built by Paul Flint, burned and Steve had a frame house constructed on the brow of the hill with a beautiful view across the Beaverlodge Valley to the mountains.

It was to this home Steve and Bessie brought Ruby, a dear blonde curly headed baby. Many pictures of the wee girl as she grew up testify to the pleasure they found in the child. Ruby remembers many calls with her mother and tea with neighbors, Mrs. Flint and Mrs. Fordyce. She recalls other kind neighbors who helped make the five mile trip to the Lower Beaverlodge school endurable. They let her ride across their pastures and fields and called her in to warm up if it were cold and stormy. To her, the country seemed vast and lonely.

While his daughter was growing up, Steve was still somewhat of a legend around the country. Many stories are told of him, galloping old Blucher past the cemetery; how he couldn't figure out why it took as much wire to fence his farm with the ten acre cemetery out of it as it did with it in; how people sometimes lost beef but Steve's herd only increased in size; how he preferred to cook his potatoes in the water from Flint's pond, rather than the water from the spring.

In 1939 the farm was rented to Eugene Russill and later sold to Steve Lewkowicz. The Craigs moved to Busby, Alberta. For seven years they ran a General Store there, then bought property at Aldergrove, B.C. where Ruby finished her education. In 1948 she married Glenn Davidson. In 1956 the Craigs disposed of their Aldergrove property and went to live with Glenn and Ruby in Vancouver. There, Bessie passed away, after which Steve moved from home to home, including that of a niece in Texas, before settling into a nursing home in Langley where he died in December 1961.

Ruby and Glenn have three children. Orphaned while young, they were taken by the Davidsons to share their childless home.

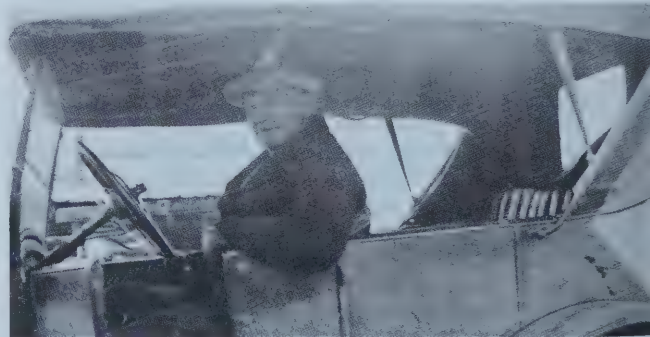


Bessie, Steve and Ruby Craig.

## DOLPHIN and RIESBROUGH

Bill Dolphin, Fred Dolphin and Will Riesbrough came from the Pickering district in Ontario to the Lower Beaverlodge district over the Edson Trail by ox cart in 1910. They filed on their homesteads at the land office in Grouard, August 6, 1910. Bill Dolphin filed on S.W. 1-71-9-W6. Fred Dolphin filed on N.W. 1-71-9-W6. Will Riesbrough filed on N.E. 1-71-9-W6.

Mrs. Riesbrough followed in the year 1912 and she and her husband farmed until 1920 when they moved to Grande Prairie owing to ill health. Mr. Riesbrough passed away a year later. Mrs. Riesbrough returned to the farm and kept house for her brother, Bill Dolphin



Fred Dolphin.



and nephew Fred until the time of her death June 16, 1951.

Bill Dolphin passed away January 20, 1932. After Mrs. Riesbrough's death, Fred with Ken Montgomery built a house in Wembley and made his home there until passing on June 18, 1963. They were very fine friends and neighbours to have and have been missed by all that knew them.

### THE CHARLIE EDGERTON STORY

In the early nineteen hundreds, glowing accounts of the development and excitement of the settlement of the Western provinces fired the interest of Charlie Edgerton of Ponty Pool, Ontario. He decided to try his fortune in the new country and went to Saskatchewan on a "Harvester's Excursion". After working near Brock for a time he continued on to Vancouver where he worked clearing land in North Vancouver, then returned to Edmonton. He and a partner operated a butcher shop for two years in that city.

About this time, reports of the good homestead land in the Peace River country were reaching Edmonton and Frank White, a homesteader from Grande Prairie was contacted for information about the country. When asked if vegetables could be grown his reply was "Potatoes grow so large they won't go in a water pail. Carrots so big you can't get them in a gunny sack and cabbages, Good God man, you have to cut them in half to get them in a wagon box!"

On April 10, 1910 Charlie Edgerton and partner Jim MacDonald started for Grande Prairie over the Edson Trail. They each had a 75 pound pack, a shot gun and one shin plaster (25 cents) between them. For days they travelled through muskeg and sloughs, over many rivers with steep banks and the never ending mud, with hordes of mosquitoes both day and night making sleep almost impossible.

On arriving in Grande Prairie, they selected and filed on homesteads, east of the present hamlet of Huallen. They then returned to Edmonton over the Edson Trail.

Most settlers in Grande Prairie went to Edson during the winter for their year's supply of groceries, often taking an extra team and getting someone that wanted transportation to drive it back.

Charlie Edgerton made many trips in this way. Often not having money to stay at stopping places he camped out with temperatures ranging from 20 to 60 below zero.

Much of the winter trail made use of the ice on the lakes and rivers where there was always the danger of an overflow. The colder the weather the more danger of this occurring from the weight of the snow and sleigh, and the only solution was to keep moving or the runners of the sleigh would freeze fast.

On one such trip crossing Sturgeon Lake it was 42 below zero when they ran into two feet of water on top of the ice. They travelled in this for three hours never knowing when they might fall through a hole in the ice. As a precaution they had a wire on the draw pin on the sleigh to release the oxen should the sleigh sink through the ice. That spring all the hair fell off the oxens legs and half their tails fell off from being frozen.

The summer was spent building a log cabin and

barn and breaking the 30 acres required to prove up his homestead.

One winter was spent digging a well for Amos Sherk and sons, which was all done with pick and shovel, one man working below and another on top pulling up the buckets of dirt with a windlass. Picture someone digging and sweating at this work, then being pulled up on a windlass to stand on top in below zero conditions, as the work was rotated. Is it any wonder Charlie suffered agony from arthritis in after years? The ultimate heartbreak being, it was a dry hole after going down 90 feet.

After proving up his homestead he sold it to Henry Staughton and bought a quarter section from "Automatic" Campbell, a trapper.

On September 12, 1916 he married Lulu Sherk, the ceremony being performed by Rev. Alexander Forbes, the first Presbyterian missionary in Grande Prairie. They made their first home on rented land one half mile south of the old town of Beaverlodge. The next year they moved on the land they had purchased, where they resided until his tragic death in a car accident at Dawson Creek in 1944.

Amos Sherk, Charlie Edgerton and Victor Flint had the first telephone in the area, utilizing the barb wire fences. This was fairly satisfactory though in wet weather it had a tendency to ground and if some one left the wire gate open there was a "communication break". Quite a far cry from our underground cable system today.

The Lower Beaverlodge school was the second school built in Grande Prairie. Charlie Edgerton served on the board for a number of years.

They had five children. Kenneth lives on the home place and married Marjorie Coe and has five daughters. Reta married Stanley Eckstrom and lives in Wembley and has eight children — five still at home. Dorothy, teacher, married Robert Dewar and lives near Beaverlodge and has two children. Viola, a teacher in Dawson Creek, is married to Melvin Benson. They have a son and a daughter.

Lulu Edgerton married Hugh Allen July 5, 1958 and resided on the Allen farm until retiring and moving to Grande Prairie. Mr. Allen died March, 1972.

Many changes have taken place since Charlie Edgerton first saw the Grande Prairie area as at that time there was only one deserted log building where the city of Grande Prairie now is built.



Lulu and Charlie Edgerton's Silver Wedding anniversary, 1941.



## KENNETH AND MARJORIE EDGERTON

Ken was the eldest child of Charlie and Lulu Edgerton of the Lower Beaverlodge district. He took his public school training locally and a 2-year Agricultural Course at Vermilion School of Agriculture in the winters of 1935-36 and 1936-37. In 1938 he and his father set up a father and son partnership that lasted until his father's untimely death in 1944.

In 1941 Ken married Marjorie Coe of Wembley. Marge was the third daughter of Fred and Laura Coe. She was born in Cassidy, Montana and came with her folks to Jarrow, Alberta when she was four years old. When Marge was 14 they moved to the Bruels' land across the road from Flints and the Coes became part of the Lower Beaverlodge neighbourhood. In 1939 they moved to Wembley.

During the days prior to their marriage a lot of merriment went on among the young people of the district. The young men would put "four-ups" on a big sleigh and gather up the young people for a dance or concert at Beaverlodge, Halcourt, Huallen or Rio Grande. Ken remembers breaking a runner on the sleigh one night upsetting the whole load, the girls in long dresses and furbishings. During the course of the evening after every Schottische there was straw shaken out on the dance floor.

Another time the young people were putting on a play in the Huallen hall and everyone went to practices in a big lumber wagon.

One night the local school teacher was at Truax's and Mervyn Jaque was supposed to be picking her up to go to a dance. But Ken got there first and spirited her away. Mervyn got there in time to see them take off so he turned his rig around and shouted to Ken, "I'll get your girl then!" "Like heck you will! I'm taking them both!" and both teams raced out of the yard at break-neck speed.

While the Coes were living in Wembley Ken had to drive his team there to do his courting. On one occasion he had to make a trip south of Wembley to get some fence posts. He got off his sleigh to walk behind



Ken Edgerton, mother, wife Marjorie and three girls.

and warm up. His horses broke into a trot and then into a gallop. The horses ended up at Coe's front door, several miles from where Ken intended going.

When Ken and Marge were married they built on the farm and their first daughter Carole was born there in 1944. At that time the Edgerton's had four quarters of land. Since then Ken has added four more daughters to his "Petticoat Ranch" and increased his holdings to nine quarters. His mixed farming activities included a herd of Holstein milk cows, pure bred Shorthorns and pigs, but no poultry! As time went on he went out of milk cows, gave up the pigs and registered Shorthorns and turned his cattle business into a feeder operation.

Lest this seems a prodigious task for one man to manage all this let it be remembered that for 16 years he had the help of his wife's nephew, Garth Koll and that in those same years his girls had grown to young maidenhood. Ken, never one to let people sit around idle had the girls on the tractor and the binder as soon as they were strong enough to handle them. And before that they had done many a long hour of root and rock picking often with help from Marge. It was because they all pulled together that a Farm Family award was made to them by the Chamber of Commerce in 1969. When Ken was a "horse farmer" his neighbours claimed he was a "can to can't" farmer — from when you CAN see in the morning until you CAN'T see at night. But with the advent of the tractor on his farm the "can't see" was forgotten and Ken regularly disturbed his neighbors' rest.

But never let it be said that the Edgertons kept their noses to the grindstone. Their girls were winners or runners-up in 4 local queen events, and Ken and Marge were better dance adherents than any of their



Pat Edgerton on Peanuts.

neighbours. Ken was a 4-H leader in beef and horse clubs for 21 years, and then went onto the Provincial 4-H Council. Marge just answered the phone, doled out coffee to executive meetings, painted floats and banners and whatever else was left around to be tidied up. Ken was a member of the United Church Official Board; Marge worked as diligently on the Cleaning Committee of the church and at the baking and serving for U.C.W. events. Ken was president of the local F.U.A. for years; Marge was secretary of the local telephone company for 10 years. Ken was a director of the County Fair for 17 years; Marge was the gal that pitched the tent at the Fair grounds and saw that exhibits were at the hall on time and kept her exhibitors on time for showing calves, horses, riding events or any number of other things in which they were all involved.

In 1955 a car accident deprived them of their second daughter, Coreen at 9 years of age. In 1966 the Edgertons celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary with a dance and social evening in the Hualien Hall. A lot of their friends took advantage of this occasion to get back at Ken for some of his pranks by presenting him with various "awards" and "certificates" for "snipe hunting" and "rum drinking" and "cooking".

The Edgertons have maintained an interest in horses. Ken likes to "wheel and deal" to turn a dollar and the horses give him an outlet for this hobby. Lorna has her own string and takes particular pride in training and showing her pets.

The Edgerton story wouldn't be complete either without some mention of the entertaining and hospitality they have dispensed through the neighbourhood get-togethers, 4-H parties, Sunday School parties, pyjama parties, choir parties, school parties, Christmas sleigh rides, all of which Marge engineers and Ken M.C.'s with graciousness and affability.

The neighbours have always believed Ken has as many lives as the proverbial cat considering all the miraculous escapes he has had from machinery accidents, horse mix-ups, and a car accident, even fire and lightning. And Marge must have the proverbial patience of Job to wait and wait wondering if Ken is late because he has a job to finish — or because he's having trouble.

Three of their girls are married. Carole majoring in Physical Education and is married to Donald Nichol, son of the late Clifford and Frances Nichol of Beaverlodge. They have two boys and live in Edmonton.

Marlene took a secretarial course at the Fairview school of Agriculture and Home Economics. She married Maynard Hotte. They have two children and live in the Beaverlodge area.

Patricia married Ross McGhan of Edmonton and is currently working on her University degree in Education at the University of Alberta. Pat interrupted her studies to take a tour of Europe before marrying Ross. They live in Edmonton and have no children.

Lorna is enrolled in a 2-year course in Horsemanship at Grant McEwan College in Edmonton and intends making her love of horses pay off.

Ken has taken the first steps towards retirement this year (1974) by selling six quarters of land. Marge started taking her first steps when she stopped sewing for her girls and took up basketry, crocheting and furniture upholstery.

#### **WILLIAM ORVILLE EISEMAN**

William Orville Eiseman with his wife and three girls moved onto their homestead in 1911. Like many settlers in this district, they stopped at Waltons for a meal and Mr. Walton would help them find suitable land close by until they could file officially. The Eisemans came from Everett, Washington because Bill was supposed to have a bad heart and needed a change of climate. They are remembered as being fine neighbors and lots of fun. They had brought a Victrola with them so their place became a mecca for the young fry — Mills and Waltons.

Wilma, Della and Beryl went to the Lower Beaverlodge school, driving a team and democrat. Sara, their youngest daughter was born here and in later life they had one son who turned out to be a big, big man. But then Bill and Mrs. Eiseman were big people too.

The Eisemans left here in 1915-16 but later came back to their land for another eight years. They left the second time to go back to Everett, Washington and within a year of their leaving, Bill died. Their land was sold to Gust Gitzel. Some of their old neighbors still hear from the girls at Christmas.

#### **CLAUDE FERGUSON**

Claude Ferguson, the only son of Mr. and Mrs. George Ferguson arrived here with his folks and took as his homestead N.E. 24-71-9. Claude was an outgoing chap, full of vim and vigour. He found plenty of work to do for neighbors besides his own and his father's farming. He spent most of his early spring days working and breaking horses for men, far and near.

Claude was also very fond of dancing, travelling many miles to attend dances. One of his lady friends lived as far away as Buffalo Lake and he'd dash over there in an afternoon to bring her to a dance in Beaverlodge and then delivered her home again all in the same day and night! Claude left with his mother and father after selling his land to Bill Blair and returned to the United States in 1928.

#### **GEORGE WASHINGTON FERGUSON**

George Washington Ferguson and his wife arrived from the State of Washington in March, 1913. With them came their daughter, also Jesse Romine, Mrs. Ferguson's son by a former marriage, his wife, and their family.

From the stories old-timers tell of the Fergusons it would appear that their door was always "off-the-latch". Mrs. Ferguson's ample proportions testified to her culinary abilities, and her good humor drew guests like bees to a flower. Full of boundless energy, it was her enthusiasm that kept the household running smoothly, the menfolk active. It was Mrs. Ferguson who tended the chickens, made the butter, delivered it to Lake Saskatoon weekly and traded her produce for groceries. It was Mrs. Ferguson who bought groceries for the neighbors who lived along the trail, and



delivered them with their mail. She is remembered for her luscious strawberries and splendid garden, for her hospitality and her kindly helpfulness with sick or ailing neighbors. One neighbor, who was a teenage boy when they lived here, said of Mrs. Ferguson, "She was a hell o' a good woman, and a great cook who 'put up the best damn meals in the country' ". Mr. Ferguson's personality seems to have receded into the background as his wife dominated the household scene.

The Fergusons and Romines returned to the State of Washington after 15 years here. They sold their land in 1928 to O. Schoeff.

### **THE FLINT FAMILY OF BEAVERLODGE — by Beth Sheehan**

As young men of 18 and 21, Victor and George Flint came to the Beaverlodge area in 1909 with the Burnsites, a religious group of which their father was one of the founders and George a member.

George had been working in New York City, while Victor, always a farm-loving boy had just taken out a homestead near Maple Creek, Saskatchewan when they learned of the plans of the group. They welcomed the chance to come with them.

When all had arrived in Edmonton, a month was spent preparing for the trip north. George and Victor were fortunate to have an aunt and uncle in Edmonton to stay with during this time. Their older brother, Clarence was also there. On the day the "colony" was to leave, the boys' uncle drove them to the gathering site in his car — steered with a handle and having hard rubber tires. This was their first car ride, and their last for many years.

Victor and George were taken into the Mac Miller family on the trail, a relationship that continued after Beaverlodge was reached, until they were established on their own. It was an arrangement they were happy to have. The Bull Outfit camped at Spruce Canyon, just south of the bend in Highway No. 2, west of Huallen. Victor and George chose land on the hill west of the camp, overlooking the valley. It was a lovely location with the Rocky Mountains in view on clear days and springs for water. The land had not been surveyed but Walter McFarlane and his crew of surveyors were in the area.

To get squatter's rights, settlers had to appear before the surveyor and declare improvements made. That summer Victor declared three rounds of logs with a tent on top, a half-acre of breaking, a team of oxen, and a half-interest in a cow. Their land is all west and south of the Beaverlodge Cemetery, which is on part of Victor's homestead. Their father had bought the scrip for the boys.

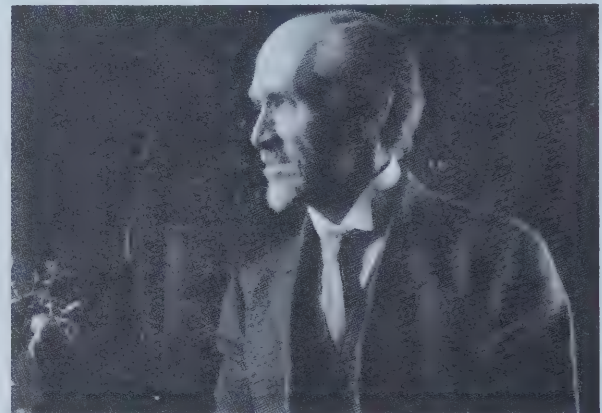
Before freeze-up in 1909, Victor plowed sods for "shingles". He built a cabin of spruce logs from a small bluff of fire-killed trees in Camp Creek Valley, meanwhile living in his tent-house with George until Christmas. George then left for Edmonton with a team of oxen and a caboose to meet their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Flint and sister Effie. They were coming from Toronto to settle here on the recommendation of their sons. When their older sister Ida arrived in Edmonton later that year, the complete family was then in the West.



The Flint girls, Pauline, Madelon and Beth.



Ira McLaughlin, Uri Powell and Frances and Victor Flint at the Old Timers' Picnic.



Paul Flint.

George Flint, Lizzie and Paul Flint, 1919.







Woodsawing at Flints.



Sam Sargeant, Bill Pierce, George and Vic Flint at Vic's spacious cabin.



Frances and Victor Flint, Pauline and Madelon, 1919.

Clarence Flint, the oldest member of the family, had been in Edmonton since 1907, as Supervisor of Physical Instruction in the Edmonton schools. Keeping in step with the others, he too filed on a homestead not far from what was later W. D. Albright's experimental station. But when World War I broke out, Clarence joined the 56th Overseas Battalion which sailed for England in 1916. In the Cambrai Battle he was Company Commander until he fell in action on September 29, 1918. Sgt. Joe Boyd of Lake Saskatoon was at his side.

Clarence married Elizabeth (Libbie) Grant in 1910. As a nurse, she served overseas until Clarence was sent to France, then returned to Canada. In 1929 Libbie married Arnold Christie and lived many years in Grande Prairie before she died in Calgary in 1960.

In January, 1910 George met his parents and sister in Edmonton. In the caboose they packed about 3,700 pounds of flour, salt, sugar and other provisions for a year and a small cook stove which was wired to the floor. A dressed hog, furniture and machinery were loaded on another sleigh purchased in Edmonton, along with a team of oxen.

Paul Flint was most interested in the procedure in shoeing the oxen before they could leave. "It seemed funny to shoe oxen. At that time they had to throw them and fasten their legs. Then two shoes with sharpened corks were nailed on each foot, as their feet are cloven. We saw how necessary these sharp shoes were by the time we got here, coming over icy hills and glare ice of rivers and lakes. Then the harness — I had never seen oxen hauling loads, except with a yoke on their necks, with a man on the nigh side with a long gad, driving by word, "Gee! Haw." But our oxen had collars and hames, backbands and breeching, trace chains and bits in their mouths, and were guided by reins."

The Flints travelled via Athabasca, Grouard, Snipe Lake and Sturgeon Lake to the Simonette river. The events of this trip and the rafting of the Simonette are told elsewhere in this book.

At Grande Prairie the company broke up and each family set out by themselves, stopping at Lake Saskatoon for mail, and to camp on their last night on the trail. The newly-come Flints were impressed with the beauty of the country, and the trail was good. One short day's journey — "Now at last we come in sight of



Victor's little shack, which is to be our future home," recorded Mr. Flint. "Mr. J. M. Miller's house is also in view. The women and children come to meet us. Warmest greetings are exchanged. We are at last on the spot to which we had so long looked forward. The friends with whom our boys had come the year previous, are all located in this beautiful valley of the Beaverlodge River." They had been six weeks and four days on the trail.

And now to farming. Mr. Paul Flint selected the NW 19-71-9-W6 for his homestead. It was registered on May 26, 1910. This gave him and his sons seven quarters in one block. "Plenty of land and very little money," he commented. "We had five places to prove up. To do our homestead duties — breaking, cropping, fencing, building five houses besides barn, pig pen, and chicken pen, gave us little time to waste, and yet there was a good deal of fun crowded into those early days."

Effie tells of the family living arrangements. "Our small log shack in which we lived the first few years, was partitioned with Hudson's Bay blankets which were pulled back during the day to give more room. George and Victor, who were then proving up their homesteads, had their own houses. George's was some distance from ours, and on cold nights he would run all the way to it. As there was no heat, he wouldn't bother to light a lamp, but quickly cast off his outer garments and jump into bed. One night he was surprised to find a strange man in his bed, and more surprised to discover a rifle beside him. The man was sound asleep, or pretended to be, so George quietly removed the rifle and went to bed. The man was gone before daylight, and as no word was spoken, George never knew who he was."

On November 23, 1910, the Beaverlodge school opened in a log building on Garnet's Truax's homestead. Mrs. Chester Drake, who came with the Bull Outfit in 1909, was the teacher. Effie took two years of High School classes there, walking three miles each way to attend. Her classmates were Anna, Ruth, Pauline and Johnnie Johnson, Albert, Cliff and Fred Miller, Rede Stone Junior and Clarence Lossing.

The family joined in community activities with zeal. Mrs. Paul Flint had trained her children to sing harmony, and the three sang at most entertainments — in duets, quartettes, Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas, Minstrel Shows, or whatever was called for. "I always got so nervous before it was time to sing that I would have to go outside and 'flip my biscuits'," Effie confessed. Victor played the mouth organ to accompany Russ Walker's violin, or whoever had musical instruments would play for dances. George played a trumpet in the first Beaverlodge Brass Band, formed in 1930.

Billy Johnson and Sam Sargeant were among the leaders who organized entertainments and who made up parodies on well-known songs of the day, substituting local color and incidents. The settlers loved them. The parodies were on such notable topics as Jim Bauman's buckskin mare, the Sons of Rest, the controversy over keeping prohibition laws in the country, the "B.O." Mill, Gaudin's Store, and Elias Smith's Butcher Shop.

Effie was one of the Four Belles — the first four single girls grown-up enough to have boys fighting for their attentions. The others were Ruth and Anna Johnson and Irene Walton. Effie was also the Queen of the Sons of Rest — a dubious honor as the Sons of Rest had a single objective — avoid work.

One summer day Effie was washing clothes outside. "I was startled by suddenly finding myself surrounded by young Indian men. I think they came up silently, hoping to scare me. They wanted water to drink and, as the water pail was empty, I handed it to one of them and pointed to the well some distance from the house. He shook his head and then the others shook their heads, I realized that they considered hauling water was women's work. This made me furious, but I remembered that Father had said we should always be friendly with the Indians, so I trudged over the stepping stones and brought back a pail of water. After they had slaked their thirst, one of them placed ten cents on the bench. This infuriated me more and I was just about to throw the dime at them, when another snatched it up and away they went for their horses and rode away giggling their heads off.

"Another day, a stranger from Peace River Crossing was passing through and stopped to have dinner with us. After dinner the men went off to work but the stranger lingered. As he was leaving, the room being crowded with table and chairs, he raised himself on tip-toes to pass between a chair and the door. In so doing, a hole in the seat of his pants caught on the doorknob and there he was, suspended on tip-toes! It was such a funny sight that mother and I were nearly doubled up with laughter, which was rude of course but we couldn't help it. The man saw nothing funny about it and scowled at us while he struggled to get free. He left without saying good-bye or thanking us for the dinner."

In January, 1911 a young milliner, Frances Sills of Tweed, Ontario started to Beaverlodge with her sister and brother-in-law, Mabel and Hugh Allen. A third sister, Mrs. LeRoy (Doll) Shisler and her husband had come in 1909 with the Bull Outfit and were living in the Lower Beaverlodge district. Doll asked some of the bachelors who were going to Edmonton for supplies if they would freight her young sister back, telling them they could charge by the pound! — indeed good news in a land of bachelors. They reckoned that the first one in Edmonton would have the best chance to freight the girl and plenty of time to court her on the return journey.

Not finding the "Girl from the East" in Edmonton, but learning that she had already left for the north the young men hurried their buying and got back on the trail fast, hoping to catch up to her. All they found were messages written in the snow, "Beaverlodge or bust. Don't get discouraged boys." They would hurry on, only to find another message. They arrived at Bezansons very tired from travelling all night, and just in time to see the Allen outfit pull out. They had lost the game. One of the young men was Victor Flint.

It was then March and getting warm. Vegetation was growing from the sods on the Shisler roof when the Allen party arrived — an intriguing sight for the



Easterners. Frances stayed with the Shislars most of the time, and helped care for baby Glen after he was born that October. She and Roy started a small enterprise of cattle buying and selling which they both enjoyed. She also bought a pony and learned to ride. The Sherks and the Flints lived within easy riding distance of Shislars, so the eight young people got together often for skating, riding, picnicking, dances and concerts and life was fun.

In 1913 the Shislars sold out because of Doll's health, returning to Ontario. Frances went with them but she loved the West. No word had been spoken on serious matters of the future between Victor and her but the winter of 1914-15 he had a great urge to visit his sister Ida in Toronto. By February 11, 1915 his courtship of Frances culminated in marriage and they returned to Beaverlodge on their honeymoon. A daughter Laura Pauline was born to them while they lived in Victor's homestead shack on the hill.

Progress had been made on proving up homesteads and scrips but George and his father were not cut out for farmers. In 1915-16 George clerked in I. E. Gaudin's new department store in Clairmont, where his father was bookkeeper. Unfortunately the enterprise failed and the store closed so George was then taken on staff at Mr. Gaudin's store in Beaverlodge. He was there for so long he became an "institution". At that time he donated his homestead house to the Burnsites for a permanent "meeting" place. Moved to the hamlet, it was used continuously until almost the last of the Burnsites passed on or moved away.

There were other shifts in the Flint household. No longer bookkeeper for Mr. Gaudin, Mr. Flint became an assistant to W. D. Albright at the new experimental sub-station he was creating. In time he had charge of the horticultural section and worked there till 1930 when he was 74 years old.

As an agent of the Burnsites Association, Mr. Flint was expected to keep in touch with the members, lead meetings and attend conventions. In carrying out these duties he was often away from home. He and Mrs. Flint and George had been living in the "Old Town" since they gave up active farming. George sold his land to Victor and their cousin, Harry Bruels. Their father's land was sold to Steve Craig.

A stroke kept Mr. Flint homebound in his last years but with a clear mind he read prodigiously until he passed away in 1940 at the age of 84, just three months after his wife, also 84. One of Mrs. Flint's great interests was writing poetry.

With the coming of the railway to Beaverlodge in 1928, a new town was located below the hill and with it a new Gaudin store. It was sold to Col. and Mrs. Lyle the next year, with George still on staff. Col. Lyle's bizarre murder of his wife and his own suicide ended that venture. George left soon after for Ontario and never returned to the West. He died in Toronto in 1972 at the age of 85. At that time there were only two known Burnsites living.

During these years Victor and Frances had built a new log house below the hill to the south, adding other buildings to Crescent Grove Farm as the years progressed. Now there were three daughters —

Madelon and Beth joining Pauline. The girls attended the Lower Beaverlodge and Beaverlodge schools, usually driving a colorful spotted horse named Zack. They scarcely had to drive him — he knew where to go.

An interest in the produce from his Holstein cows brought a place on the board of the Valhalla Creamery for Victor, though for many years homemade butter was a product of the Flint farm, to be traded for groceries. Red currants, strawberries and eggs were also sold, though sometimes the price scarcely warranted it — berries at five cents a basket and the same for a dozen eggs. However, like their neighbors who were also trying to add a little income to the low prices of grain, they got by and the girls grew up. The parents found more time to participate in community projects, including the United Church; agricultural societies (Lake Saskatoon first, then Grande Prairie); farm organizations; the Co-operative store, Community Centre, hospital and South Peace Historical Society, all in Beaverlodge. They were greatly interested in preserving the past of this new country.

Semi-retired in the 1950's, the Flints spent winters in Pasadena, California, returning for the summers here. In 1967 they moved to Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie. Frances passed away in 1968 at the age of 80, and Victor the following year, also 80.

Pauline attended the Olds Agricultural School in 1934-5, but was stricken with a sudden illness there and died in February, 1935.

Madelon married Albert Truax in 1939 and in time they took over the Flint farm. They raised Jerry, Lyle, Garnet and Linda and have six grandchildren.

Beth followed her aunts to Ontario in 1939, working in offices there until 1943 when she returned and later that year married Everett Sheehan of Clairmont. They have one son, Kells who is farming with his father. Married to Moira Cooke, he has two small daughters.

Madelon's and Beth's grandchildren together can trace their ancestry back to seven South Peace pioneer families.

Victor Flint, a slight, wiry man will be remembered by his friends for his good nature and quiet compassion, for his twinkling kidding of the girls (Hello Beautiful!) and his courteous concern for everyone; for his whistling as he hustled about his chores; for the pleasure he gave others with his harmonica and his repertoire of songs with which he regaled sleigh loads of high school kids on their weekly trips to town. His children and grandchildren will never forget the impromptu concerts he gave in the barn while milking the cows, or all the "foolish nonsense" that they learned from him.

The family recall his recollections, "My thoughts go back occasionally to the early settlement of this country and to the good times we used to have. Although we lacked the modern forms of entertainment we had local talent in concerts, dances, and played cards to amuse ourselves.

Some of the concerts were very good. Billy Johnson and Sam Sargeant were among the leaders who provided entertainment. They would make up a parody on well-known songs, bringing in local incidents to make it more interesting.



I recall one parody they made up, and sang it to the tune of "And He Went Travelling." One of the verses was in connection with an attempt to bring liquor into this country, which, at that time was Indian Territory and no liquor permitted except on permit. The verse dealt with the efforts on the part of one person to have that law changed. W. A. Rae, promoter of the Argonauts, was said to be the man referred to.

A man named Rae has tried, they say  
For a license to sell booze.  
He said if we got at this thing right  
We can have it if we choose.  
But when the farmers heard of this  
It filled them with alarm;  
They said, "We do not want this thing —  
For it will do our country harm."

And so they went travelling,  
The petition they did sign —  
Everyone fell in line —  
For we do not want their whiskey, beer or wine.

Another verse was in connection with Jim Bauman, who lived in the district and had a race horse.

To Saskatoon I went one day  
To see the ponies race.  
They said to bet on Bauman's horse —  
It was sure to get a place.  
So on Bauman's horse I put my pile,  
But when the bell was rung,  
He stopped to buzz around a while  
And I got badly stung!

And so I went travelling,  
Travelling,  
Back to the old folks at home."

#### WINTER TRAIL STORY — by Beth Sheehan

The Paul Flint family including Paul, wife Elizabeth, daughter Effie and son George as teamster left Edmonton on a January afternoon and the mother begins the story "The time came for our departure, and with the thermometer registering forty degrees below zero it looked rather frightening. We found it required all the courage we could muster to leave a comfortable house and face the possibility of living in a tent for weeks. Reaching the caboose, which had been left in a suburban part of the city, we found to our surprise that it looked quite inviting and even cheerful with a bright fire crackling in the stove and sending out warm rays of heat which were indeed welcome on that bitter cold day. Kitchen utensils adorned the walls, 'grub boxes' and a barrel containing baker's bread, a combined table and cupboard and great piles of warm bed clothing were stowed away.

"The oxen were now harnessed and as the great, awkward creatures, puffing clouds of frosted breath, lumbered through the frozen snow, I wondered how long it would take us to cover 480 miles at that rate.

"The sleigh at last gave a start and we were off. All the things on the walls swung like pendulums. The stove strained, the sleighs creaked through the frosty snow beneath the heavy loads, the drivers shouted and cracked their whips, and the candle flickered in its socket on the wall. My daughter and I cuddled up by

the fire and waited and watched and listened — it was all so strange.

"For the first two or three days Effie and I stayed close to the stove, keeping up the fire and ourselves warm as it was exceedingly cold. But this method of living proved unhealthy and I became ill. Through the experience I found it was better to endure the cold and have plenty of fresh air."

At Lewis' Stopping Place the family bought two black Minorca hens and a rooster. From Athabasca they travelled on ice and found the days almost monotonous because of the smoothness of the trail. At Grouard they met the Rev. Alexander Forbes and his wife, Presbyterian missionaries going to Grande Prairie.

On leaving Grouard the weather had changed to warm and balmy, but before nightfall delight was turned to anxiety because of the suddenly baring ground. They were still 120 miles from the Big Smoky river which they expected to cross on ice, but if the warm weather continued the ice could go out and they would be stranded. They hurried the tired animals as much as they could.

Just beyond Buffalo Bay Mr. Flint looked ahead and saw a boy coming towards him. "I thought it was a breed footing his way from Sturgeon to Grouard. His face was tanned to about the color of the breeds. He stepped out into the snow and when the load was opposite him, he climbed up and to my astonishment said, in plain English, "You're Mr. Flint." I couldn't deny it. "Well," he said, "I'm his son." He had come from Beaver Lodge, 160 miles, to meet us." "We had not seen him for nearly three years," said his mother, "and for a while the woods resounded with ringing cheers." They felt they must now be nearing home.

The family wanted to cross the West Prairie river to camp one evening. The sun had been so hot that day that the snow was honeycombed and soft. When they reached the steep banks of the river, the road was a mass of mud and ice, and the river itself covered with two or three inches of water.

"Effie and I walked down the steep declivity before the teams started. At the river's edge I looked away up the bank and there, on the top, silhouetted against the evening sky and trembling preparatory to making its descent, was the caboose. I turned my back, hiding my face in my hands and shuddering as I thought of the possible fate of the only home we possessed in the world. Then, amid clanking of chains, harness, kitchen utensils and yells from the drivers, down came our little home, down, down and I heard it come near where I stood. Looking up, expecting to see everything smashed, there sat the driver with a grin on his face. 'What's the matter, Mother?'

Next morning two Mounted Police rode into our camp and Effie came to tell me her fears of the possibility of our caboose being searched for liquor. I had taken a small quantity of spirits with me to be used in case of sickness in camp, reasoning that even if the country was under prohibition laws, I would risk it, and so had put my half-pint into a new granite tea steeper and set it among the rest of the kitchenwares. But this morning, whether it was the effect of being in such close proximity to a red-coated officer of the law,

or my conscience, I looked at it from a different viewpoint, and didn't stop to analyze. I had given it a fair trial and it hadn't cured my cold, and it was certainly not worth a fine, so, stepping to the door, I threw it out. The boys laughed and said I might have treated the 'cops' and not wasted it."

Mr. Flint tells of more trials. "Passing through a dense spruce bush, the trail was cut only wide enough for the loads to get through, so it requires fine manoeuvring to get the wider caboose through. The sun has made the right side of the trail lower than the other and tilts the caboose till you think all the trees are leaning purposely to catch it. You haul up, Haw! and say, 'There I've missed that,' when behold, the sleigh slides Gee! right down behind the next tree. The top corner of the caboose is against the tree. Sometimes we can pry the runner up. Again, we hitch behind and pull back; some trees have to be cut. Finally, we emerge onto Snipe Lake. We will not soon forget the heat and water on that lake. I put on a straw hat and this is about the 14th of March. The hot weather is exceptional. Our poor oxen are so tired that I feel sick urging them on."

Effie had a side-light to the day's events. "One time our caboose tilted over at a dangerous angle. Mother had been standing in front of the stove cooking something, and was singing 'One Sweetly Solemn Thought'. She had come to the part, 'Father be near when my feet are slipping o'er the brink,' when over she went backwards. A dish of beans was baking in the oven; the weight of it hitting the oven door caused the door to fly open and the beans landed in mother's lap. I was lying on the bed reading and landed head first against the side boards of the caboose, but neither of us was hurt. While extricating ourselves, we noticed a pail of honey slide off a large spike on one of the up-rights topple over sideways and hit the bed. The lid came off and what a mess! We had to melt snow to clean it up. Fortunately the stove didn't tip over on mother, as it was fastened down." After that, all cooking operations ceased while travelling and the stovepipes were taken down.

At Sturgeon Lake the family dared stop only long enough to feed the oxen and themselves. They were still 40 miles from the Smoky river. Sturgeon Lake was crossed in the moonlight. Arriving on the far shore about 1:30 a.m. they drove right into the midst of the Anderson outfit of Clairmont, whom they had encountered before. They had made their beds right on the trail, amidst the remains of their caboose which was smashed in the Snipe Lake bush. Their large herd of cattle was a nuisance all night for they wanted to eat the hay on the Flint loads. An all-night watch had to be set up.

Tension built as the ten outfits now travelling together scrambled over logs and stumps, catching a little ice where they could and making all possible haste to reach the Simonette river down which they must go for 20 miles to its junction with the Smoky.

Mr. Flint describes the scene. "Down we go onto the Simonette. This is about the only part of our journey I never wish to repeat. The heat has never let up. No frost at night. In places the water is rushing across, two feet deep. We cannot tell where danger

spots are, and we try to go night and day, but some of our animals are not equal to it. They get so tired they want to lie down every half mile. There are sand bars to cross. Some snow is still on them but so soft the runners cut right through into the sand and gravel. Cutbanks are to right and left. What would we do if the Simonette should go? Victor goes ahead most of the day testing, then rushed away ahead to the Smoky, returning to tell us the Smoky has gone! We are a day too late."

The McFarlane survey outfit had passed the group only hours before but were able to cross the Smoky before it broke. Albert Smith had a load stranded on an island in the middle of the river. Great masses of ice were travelling down the madly rushing river, but the caravan moved on to the confluence before pulling to shore. Their relief at reaching land safely must have been overwhelming. They camped in view of the promised land. "Our eyes could behold the long-looked-for Grande Prairie country, but a mightier than Jordan rolled between," said Mr. Flint. "Next morning we drew up to a higher bench and none too soon, for away went the Simonette, tearing into the Smoky before us. This was the 18th of March — Effie's sixteenth birthday, and a lovely day it was. She will not soon forget that birthday."

"Now let me tell of our two-week stay at the Smoky. The weather was warm and beautiful, with the exception of one day when we had a few snow flurries. This weather made our stay like a picnic. Our party now consisted of Amos Sherk and his two sons, Gordon and Marley; Mac Miller and his father-in-law, Mr. Crabbe, with Harry Walker accompanying them; Roy Shisler, and the five of us. There were three cabooses and nine teams of oxen. The Anderson-Twombly outfit was near-by."

"A visitor, strolling down the pack trail, could almost imagine himself in a farm yard as he came to our camp," said Mrs. Flint. "A short distance from the back of our caboose, in a little pen built of poles, was Mr. Sherk's Tamworth pig; nearer, our two black hens and the rooster cackled and crowed to their hearts' content and sometimes treated us to a fresh egg. Then, when Mr. Miller's Scotch collie was not around, Mr. Shisler's cat frolicked and ran up trees without a care on her feline mind."

"When, in all ages past, had those solitudes presented such a picture?", asked Mr. Flint.

"The Council of War on Ways and Means," he continued, "concluded that rafts should be built at once. But our company had little experience in that line. Only Harry Walker had seen anything of it in his South African War experiences. The first raft was loaded with well on to \$1,000 worth of machinery — mowers, rakes, discs, harrows, and some provisions. It swung off with seven of our young men to propel it, but was caught on a sandbar before it got into the main current. There was a call for a team to pull them off. The lot fell to me to ride one ox and guide the team out to the raft. I fell off going down the steep bank, but was soon on again. It is difficult enough to drive oxen straight on land, but in the water it was impossible, so Marley Sherk waded back and led them. A chain was fastened to the raft so that when it swung off the chain



would drop. Just one pull was enough and away they went. It was easy enough getting the oxen back to shore. But think of that raft with no rudder, swinging out into the current of the Smoky river. Where were they going? They did not know. However, about a mile down stream, they rounded a bend and there was a lovely low beach. Out of the current they glided, right up to it. A better landing place could not be found."

After unloading the machinery, the men recrossed the river on the raft but were taken about another mile down stream. With ropes they pulled the raft back along the shore, but soon found it was quicker and easier to build new rafts for each trip. Four more were made, loaded and taken across the river where their contents were deposited on the shore. Chains holding them together were then taken off and they were allowed to drift away. However, the last big raft was brought part way back to take the remaining people, camping gear and the harness across. We were fortunate in having a spruce grove right there where we could get logs 32 feet long and two feet thick. That last big raft was some distance down the river, and as it was too far to carry our remaining stuff, we extended the floor of our caboose for a raft. On this we put our stove, camp utensils, the remaining grub, and box of chickens, together with all the harness, neck yokes, whiffle trees and such for nine teams!

"Whilst the boys were getting the oxen down to the river, Harry Walker and I were to take this little raft with its precious cargo, to the big raft awaiting. We held it by a rope but when the current caught it, it was too much for us, although we tried snubbing the rope round a big boulder of ice. The whole shore was piled with these great blocks. The raft got away and there was our stuff going on its way to the Peace river and possibly the Arctic Ocean!

"We ran down the shore. I rushed in up to my neck and got hold of the raft, but failed to get the rope and had to let go." (Mrs. Flint's description goes, 'With horror I saw my husband, who knew nothing about swimming, up to his neck in the cold, icy water.')

"Meanwhile," Mr. Flint resumed, "a chair slid down to one end and dragged off one thing after another — harness and neck yokes, and then the box of hens! Fortunately the lid opened and the hens got out and knew enough to make for shore. Mrs. Flint was watching and when she saw her precious chickens adrift, she scrambled over the ice blocks and caught them as they came to shore depositing them in an overturned chair caught in the ice blocks. They made no attempt to get away. Harry jumped into the water and threw floating harness and other things onto the shore. He finally caught the raft and we soon fastened it alongside the big one, where everything was now placed. Twenty-five dollars would cover the loss.

"At last, Mrs. Flint, Effie, and I embarked, leaving nine sets of sleighs piled on the shore, to be got when the river was frozen the next winter. (Mrs. Flint's version: 'Now the time had come which for two weeks I had dreaded. I must board a raft and cross a river with large boulders of ice floating down stream!'). Serenely our bark took us over, Mrs. Flint sitting in a rocking chair in the midst. Very soon we were able to say, 'Here we are in the promised land. We are on Grande

Prairie soil.' On April 1, 1910, we celebrated in the long-looked-for land of our dreams. (Mrs. Flint: 'It was the smoothest ride I ever had on water.')

"There is one more scene to complete the tale of our two weeks' sojourn at the Smoky. That is the swimming of cattle across the river. I would like to have a picture as I viewed it from the bank. The boys drove the cattle to the edge of the river and with difficulty got them started, but the leader took them in a wide circle right back. Again they were started, but this time a team of oxen was slowly led along the opposite shore. The swimming cattle saw them and all 19 of them struck the current and swam one after another for the far shore. Though taken down stream considerable distance, all landed safely.

Others had been stranded at the Smoky at the same time and also had to build rafts. Mrs. Flint said, "One morning Effie and I heard voices and, looking out, saw a raft on which were seated Mrs. Alex Forbes and Mrs. W. A. Rae, who waved to us. Several men were rowing and the ladies looked as calm and self-possessed as though they were on an ocean liner." A. M. Bezanson called at the Flint caboose one evening after his raft had capsized up the river and he lost everything but a "two-bit" oil can, which bobbed gaily to the shore. He attracted the attention of the men on the other side of the Smoky and signalled for them to bring a boat. Boody Sprague attempted to make the crossing but his boat capsized also and to save himself he climbed onto a cake of ice that was stuck on a sandbar in the middle of the river. There he had to remain all night, as they dared not attempt to rescue him until daylight. Amos Sherk told his family afterwards that there were not many eyes closed that night, as all minds were with Boody out there on a cake of ice, fighting to keep warm and praying that the river would not rise and dislodge this ice cake. Prayers were answered as the dim light of the morning found him still there, slapping his arms against his body to keep warm. He was successfully rescued, to the relief of all. That was a spring the settlers never forgot.

Wagons had been sent from Beaverlodge to the stranded settlers. The snow was entirely gone, but the frost was not out of the ground, so there were problems yet, with sloughs and mudholes. Huge signs had been seen in Edmonton — "Lots in Grande Prairie City for Sale" — and there were great expectations of finding a thriving metropolis. At Grande Prairie, the Catholic Mission, "Hotel de Bredin" and George Diller's shack hardly measured up.

#### JOHN FOLSTER

A bachelor from New Zealand, John Folster filed on S.E. 22-71-9 in August of 1917, the land which Ed Mayer now farms. A boy who worked for John occasionally recalls that he was a very hard worker, driving himself and his horses long hours. With little heed for himself or horses, he'd stop only long enough at noon for the horses to graze the headlands, while he himself foraged for berries. Besides his own quarter of land he rented a quarter from Jake Stegmeier.

The story is told that even on Sundays he'd be up and out in the fields by daybreak, but on that day he'd tie his horses in the fence corner at church time, at-



tend service in the school house two miles away, then hustle back to work.

He was a mighty "near". At one time when he had threshers he had not provided food for their meal. When it came supper time and his hungry crew of five quit for a meal he had to go to a neighbor for bread. One of the crew recalls that to stave off their hunger pangs the crew found a box of apples under his bed and ate half of them before he got back.

John returned to New Zealand in 1927, after selling his farm to John Mayer.

#### MIKE GEDOZ

Mike Gedoz was Polish and a certified coal miner. He mined for many years at the Luscar Mines out of Edmonton before he filed on his quarter south of Sherks in 1914. Then during his two weeks vacation each year, he would come north to work on the buildings on his beloved homestead. He broke about 30 acres of land but his neighbors did his farming. In return he bought the seed, paid the threshing bill and supplied all the machinery.

As a coal miner he was held in very high esteem by his superiors. He was paid as much as twenty dollars a day — which in the 1920's was an unheard of wage. After the war, and after he had retired from the mines, he was asked to go north to supervise mining operations at an astronomical wage. But he turned it down. He said, "I don't want to die in a mine, and I don't want to leave my family, so I won't take your job."

He was over sixty years of age when he married a widow with three children and knew for the first time the pleasures of family life. No job was going to deprive him of them at that age.

On his farm in Lower Beaverlodge he grew the first cucumbers this district had seen raised. He grew them in a cold frame, pickled them in a big barrel and then invited the neighbors in for a picnic to share his cucumbers.

It was in 1934 that he brought his wife and her son Cashmere Adamchuck to the farm, five years after he had retired from the mine. His wife had two daughters in Edmonton and she flitted back and forth to visit them. Mike and Cashmere enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of the farm.

In 1948 Mike contracted cancer of the esophagus and died very quickly. He was buried in the Grande Prairie cemetery. His wife and her son returned to Edmonton where she had property of her own. The land was sold to Clifford Cassity.

#### VALENTINE GOEBEL AND FAMILY

Valentine Goebel was born at Spruce Grove in 1898, when it was still part of the North West Territories. His ancestors came from Austria. He grew up in Spruce Grove and in 1922, married a Stony Plain girl — Emilie Kulak, of Polish ancestry. They rented land at Stony Plain for six years. When they heard of cheap land to be had in Lower Beaverlodge, they looked at it, liked it, and moved here in 1928. They purchased land one half mile south of the school, which was handy for their children.

Mrs. Goebel said that with nine children it was a "hard go" as they hit the "dirty thirties", to make

their change. Val worked out for several winters — at one time at Mile 7 on the Alaska Highway. Emilie and the children managed the chores and kept the wood boxes full. She was grateful to a sister-in-law who would sew for her girls so they had warm school clothes.

The Goebels were German Lutheran and Mrs. Goebel said they spoke German in their home a good deal when the children were younger. Now all but their two youngest speak the German language and all of them understand it. They tried to be in their places at church on Sunday. There were no Sunday School classes for their children.

In 1972 Mr. and Mrs. Goebel celebrated their golden wedding. One of their grandsons thought it would be delightful if they were to arrive at the church as they had fifty years ago — with a team and sleigh. So off they laughingly went, wrapped cozy and warm behind a bell-bedecked team.

They lost an infant son in 1929 and since then two of their daughters, Evelyn and Myrtle, have passed away. As for the other six children, Frieda married Cliff Cassity and lives in the Hualien area; Elnora married John Breitreutz of Vernon, B.C.; Roland married Jennifer Nichlaus of Rycroft; Floyd married Eva Elford of Grande Prairie; Roy married Joyce Lind of Barrhead; and Virginia married Orval Floss and they live at Revelstoke, B.C.

The Goebels farmed until around 1969 when they retired and rented their land. They still reside in their own home on the farm.

#### JACOB PETER GLESSNER

Jacob Peter Glessner, an old soldier of the Boer War, came from Spokane, Washington in 1913. He settled in the Lower Beaverlodge district on the land now owned by Kenneth Edgerton. Jake was a jolly, hearty chap with a head "as bald as a billiard ball" and was often referred to as "Dutch-oven" Jake. He had a great singing voice and a flair for hospitality. His place soon became a mecca for all the single chaps on a Sunday afternoon. In fact his visitors came so often and stayed so late that they formed a club, calling themselves "The Sons of Rest", all vowing never to eat breakfast until the sun came in the west window! Among those Jake welcomed to his club-house were Jake and John Stegmeier, Bill Stark, Pinky Neugaard, Homer Jaque, Gordon Cameron, Art and Jim Walton and Rev. George Kettly.

One story is told of how one Sunday morning Homer Jaque and Gordon Cameron shaved their heads as bald as Jake's. Then all three went belatedly to Church so they could sit at the front and fluster their associate, Rev. Kettly.

Whenever there was a group gathered at Jake's a hearty sing-song often developed into an impromptu concert and everyone was expected to contribute. Jake would bar the door so Gordon Cameron couldn't leave. Gordon was too shy to perform and is reported to have slipped out the window on occasion.

When Jake died of cancer in Edmonton in 1917, Charlie Edgerton bought his land. Gordon Sherk was the executor of his will and his sister recalls they had one of Jake's balky horses on their hands for a long time.



## OTTO GRUNSKI

Otto Grunski came to the Lower Beaverlodge area in 1928 and bought the Hugh Ross land where Bob Russell now farms. From pictures he proudly placed in his home, we knew he was a married man, but neither his wife nor his family joined him here. He came here from the irrigation district around Bassano because he felt the "water was bad for his rheumatism". He told his neighbors that in those years in southern Alberta, he had owned one of the first big tractors of that area, and had done considerable breaking for others. Otto was a hard working and a hard drinking man. When he was breaking for someone, he'd work day and night until the job was finished . . . then go on a bender.

At Lower Beaverlodge, he farmed with horses. He was a good farmer and a good neighbor. At one time, he rented the Peek quarter, one of Stegmeier's quarters, and a quarter north of Gordon Cameron's. He had "real snorty" horses which only he could handle.

Besides the grain he grew, Otto also kept pigs. When he got too thirsty to farm, he took care of his pigs by opening a small hole in the lower side of a granary and letting the oats pour out slowly. The pigs ran to the creek for water.

Otto lived alone as long as we knew him, except for a couple of years when Sophie Alferiki kept house for him.

A neighbor boy went to visit Otto one day and caught him trying to lead his sorrel mare across the railroad trestle near his house. Otto was in his cups, and only stayed upright himself by hanging on to the horse's mane. Nevertheless, he was quietly insisting to the horse that it should put one foot ahead of the other on the open ties before it . . . and the horse was doing it.

He sold his land to Bob Russell, retaining the house for as long as he lived. Otto died here and was buried in the Beaverlodge cemetery.

## JACK HARDING

Jack Harding and family of four settled along the Beaverlodge river in 1908. Bill Bernard helped him build a house and stable. Next spring Jack located near Twin Lakes (Clairmont) and several years later was joined by a couple of brothers, also from Texas and settled near Pouce Coupe.

## MELVIN HART

The Melvin Hart story so parallels the growth of HualLEN it is difficult to separate the two.

When Melvin came to HualLEN in 1933 at the age of 20 years he was already wise in the ways of grain buying. His stepfather Ray Rule was buying grain at Clairmont and Melvin had helped him. He had done some relief work at Hythe and was second man at Sexsmith when asked to relieve at HualLEN. Alex Gray had to have an operation and when he retired following it, Melvin was asked to stay on permanently. "By the way," his supervisor said, "How old are you?" Melvin wasn't old enough to be bonded until January of the following year. He has been at HualLEN acting as agent for Alberta Pacific for 38 years. When asked if he'd ever been approached to make a move he said, "Yes",

but that the only move he would make would be to his farm! Melvin had a quarter section south of Wembley.

In 1937 he married Lucy Thoreson and they moved into the cottage Cal Campbell had built. During this time Melvin was active about HualLEN, building the curling rink, on the hall board committee for 12 years, including the year he mustered up volunteer help to get it built, sparred in the boxing club, curled in winter, coached a girls' softball team and danced at all the hall dances. He and his brother-in-law, Ted Thoreson farmed the Walton land for quite a few years.

Lucy and Melvin had one son Wayne, born in 1944. When electricity was available they bought Buck Schanuel's house and remodelled it into a very liveable home. They enjoyed gardening and flowers and always kept their place neat as a pin.

Melvin also grew some experimental plots for the Alberta Pacific behind the elevator — testing various strains for adaptability in our climate. It was quite a successful venture until John Meyers' cows came over and harvested them for him.

He remembers selling Bill Romkey some first-generation Thatcher wheat in 1940, from which Bill got a whopping crop of 60 bushels to the acre that went No. 1 Northern, a real rarity and a feather in Melvin's cap for introducing it to Bill.

In 1951 the Alberta Pacific acquired the U.G.G. elevator at HualLEN and Melvin operated both elevators. Asked if this was a hardship Melvin said, "I used to work under a lot of pressure. I was trying to farm too!"

But for all that, when John or Bill Blair came in and began talking fishing Melvin could find a way to join them. Bill had a cabin on the Wapiti and as soon as they could drive down in the spring they'd be there. Lucy would take Melvin and a load of supplies down every other weekend. With fishing, berry picking and companionship Melvin would relax. In the winters he curled until arthritis in his knees made it difficult to be enjoyable.

The whole neighbourhood remembers Melvin for his role as Father Confessor. Being a quiet reserved man, neighbours' confidences were never betrayed. He will admit now though that his ears heard more than farm troubles.

In 1967 Lucy and Melvin's only son Wayne was killed in a tragic car accident and in 1970 Lucy died.

It was too bad that she could not have shared in the plaudits of the community when they gave a testimonial function in Melvin's honor on his retirement from the elevator in 1971. He was presented with a neat smoking stand built in the form of his beloved elevator and with many affirmations of his neighbours' esteem.

The Alberta Pacific elevators have since closed their doors at HualLEN but Melvin still enjoys his garden and his freedom to fish when he likes — and his two quarters of land he bought from the Blair brothers.

## EDWARD JAMES HICKEY

A white beard, a shock of white hair and a "keep thy distance" attitude prevented neighbours from

becoming familiar with Edward Hickey and his wife. Less of a "loner" than her husband, Mrs. Hickey would occasionally seek the company of her neighbour, Mrs. Cassity and a bit of their story leaked out over the tea-cups. It seems that at one time "Hickey" had made his stake in the Klondike gold rush as a prospector and had used his earnings to buy a large hotel in Seattle. He got into "some sort of shootin' trouble and got mixed up with the law" and lost all he had. He came to the Lower Beaverlodge district in 1916 with some very fine horses and filed on N.W. 4-71-9, close to Cassitys.

The thoroughbred horses that Hickey brought with him were his pride and joy. Of excellent lineage, he boasted of their prowesses but neighbours said that they were never treated to any examples of it. He had a stallion named Cedelia and two mares, Queen Charlotte and Sadie. But aside from telling Probst that he was a "damn fool" for not buying a fancy horse like his he was never known to show them off. As far as neighbours can recall, he didn't raise any colts from these fancy horses, even though he claimed they were worth \$2000-\$3000 a piece.

There was another Hickey in the country, near Goodfare and a lot of Edward's mail would go to him. To prevent this he used to have his mail come to his horse "Cedelia" Hickey.

Eugene Probst remembers cutting feed for Hickey with his new binder, as Hickey didn't have machinery of his own. A rabbit jumped out of a hole in front of the horses and frightened them so that they jumped and snapped a rein. Finding themselves without control the horses ran away. Probst had his thigh hurt in the melee and it was four days before they got the binder back into working condition. Hickey used the feed he put up to winter 100 head of cattle for I. E. Gaudin.

Edward was a very strong man. A neighbour helped him load a hayrack one day and while he could hardly lift his side of the rack, Edward easily lifted his corner and set it in place.

The Hickey's had two sons. One died quite young and the other when he was about 21. Neither of them lived at Lower Beaverlodge. The Hickeys lived in the district for about eight years. Then Mrs. Hickey developed dropsy and except for neighbourly ladies' ministrations, suffered out her days on the homestead. When she died in 1924 Hickey sold his land to the Mackintosh brothers, had a sale and just disappeared. The stallion died and one mare was known to have been sold at the auction sale.

They had few friendly dealings with their neighbours and seldom took part in community events. Those of the neighbors who were children were greatly in awe of, if not completely frightened by the stern old man with the white beard and the white hair.

#### JOHN AND AGNES HONE

Mrs. Agnes Hone wrote her account of their life here on the homestead for the Edmonton Journal. In it she told of her husband, John, their three small girls, and an older man, one Peter Dill, coming from Saskatchewan with the cry "Grande Prairie or Bust". She and the girls stayed in Edson while the men scouted ahead in a light wagon with a fast team. They

got as far as the Little Smoky river and decided to leave the wagon to press on to the Beaverlodge in search of land adjacent to water. John remained at the land site, N.W. 18-71-9-W6, and began his preparations for the arrival of his family. In March, 1912, when the ferries and bridges were in, Mrs. Hone, three girls, aged 3, 4 and 5 and Peter Dill stocked up, bought a cow and a team of oxen and started off, making three miles the first day. Rain dogged their trail and frost coming out of the ground didn't help. When another traveller offered to double up with them, they were glad of the help. They decided after a couple of days travel that they were too heavily loaded so sold most of their flour. Mrs. Hone recalls her baby being sick, a fire burning holes in their tent, getting stuck going down hill, the discovery of colored water in their precious "bottle of whiskey", baking scones at night for next days food supply, building corduroy roads to speed up the trip, buying herself men's overalls after she had worn out two skirts, and she and her little girls dancing the Highland Fling on the ferry for the ferryman.

One day they passed an effigy of "Uncle Sam" on the trail. The inscription read "Uncle Sam died of mud fever on the Edson Trail, 1911." Another night they camped near Indians and performed dances for them and shared scones, but couldn't get the Indians to dance. They were short on hay and supplies and they had to lay up days at a time when they found grass, to rest and recuperate the oxen. At Sturgeon Lake they bought fresh supplies. At Grande Prairie, Mrs. Hone bought a pinto pony as she had walked from Edson to save the oxen. After three months they were finally at their home in Beaverlodge. Pete didn't care for it so he took the pinto and rode back to Edson.

The Hones recount taking in the Lake Saskatoon sports — with their cow in tow, and buying lumber to make furniture and a door. She mentions the community ball games and the little log church on the top of the hill (Geo Flint's homestead house). She herself hunted ducks and prairie chickens and fished the river for trout. They tried to grow a garden but had frost every week of the year. They got their mail at Don Albrights.

Mrs. Hone sounded as though each new experience was a high adventure for her. But nevertheless after a winter of stoking fires all night to keep her girls warm, and on short rations, she decided for their sakes she should return to Saskatchewan. She and the girls got a ride to Edmonton with the Flint Bros. in 1914. John stayed to prove up his homestead and later sold his land to S.A. Maclean. Later it went to V. Flint and is now farmed by A. Truax.

#### HOWARD HENRY

Howard Henry and his brother Albert homesteaded in the Lower Beaverlodge district near Ailens and Waltons. Their father had been a contractor at Niagara Falls, Ontario. Little is known of Albert, who filed in 1917. Howard had come in 1910 and was better known as a "comical fellow." He had a pair of clever hands and many pieces of homemade furniture are still about the district to prove it. Newlyweds were often blessed by a free gift of an arm chair or washstand from his work bench.



One lady recalls that Howard's motto was "live for today". He would get a year's supply of candles and then light them and put them in all his windows — just for the fun of it. Like a big kid he'd ask his neighbors, "Did you see my lights last night?"

No one remembers when the boys left or where they went.

### THE HAMLET OF HUALLEN

Then the long awaited train came in 1928 and with it the establishment of grain elevators and the hamlet of Huallen was born. It was named in honor of Hugh Allen, M.L.A. of the Lower Beaverlodge district. An influx of new settlers bought all the available land and created the need for new services — a local store and post office and local telephone exchange — a livestock shipping point — a community hall and a curling rink.

Nelson Clow and his wife Clara were the first to set up store keeping at the Huallen siding. Neighbours remember them doing business in a tent before they put up their building.

Two grain elevators, the Alberta Pacific and the U.G.G. went up that year on a siding, along with a grain loading platform and a cattle pen. "Uncle" Cal Campbell had Chris Rutberg put up a set of logs for a smart little cottage-style house. Clows built a long, low log house behind the store. In 1934 logs had been taken out and lumber sawn for a curling rink and a community hall.

The Alberta Paddle Grain Co. has had only five operators at Huallen — James Smith, the councillor from Wembley, often walked down the tracks from his Wembley home to Huallen for the day's work. Joe T. Charest, a Frenchman followed Smith, then Jack Reive, a big, tall Scotsman. Alex Gray, originally a cabinet maker from Ontario, came next. He had to have an ulcer operation so 20-year old Melvin Hart was sent in as a relief man. He has been there ever since.

The United Grain Growers changed men more frequently — Jack Mitchell and his family were first to fill the Grain Grower's house, then in succession — Leonard Kaufman, William Kirkpatrick, Tom O'Neil, Gordon Moon, Jack Miller, Clayton Schoftner, George Stevens and Dave Cochrane. About 1954 the U.G.G. sold to the Alberta Pacific and Melvin Hart has worked both houses ever since.

Nelson Clow was the instigator and promoter of the Huallen Curling Club. Originally a skating rink was built around the outside of the curling rink but the building had a flat roof and it leaked so badly that it had to be torn down. Many local farmers got their first taste of curling and bonspiels at that Huallen rink. Nels worked so hard at getting the rink going that Mrs. Clow despaired of any help in the store.

Logs were taken out and lumber sawn for the Huallen hall at the same time as for the curling rink — in 1933. The curling rink was finished in 1934 and in 1935 Guy Ireland was hired, at \$3.00 per day, to frame and supervise the construction of the hall. He and Louis Ulmer, who built the chimney, were the only men who received wages.

The first hall-board meeting was held in the Lower Beaverlodge school. Gordon Sherk, Mrs. Clow and

Melvin Hart were named to the board and Mr. and Mrs. Clow and Melvin to the building committee. Melvin remembers the summer they built the hall was a busy one for him. Mr. and Mrs. Clow, Melvin Willsey and the Clow children took off to the tall timbers on a camping trip so Melvin was left alone to line up workers for each day's work. He didn't have too much trouble though and a good building was constructed.

Many were the activities that the hall has seen. A stage was built so that plays and concerts could be accommodated. There were dances every two weeks with Doug and Alma McFarlane of Beaverlodge playing. Too there was Freddie Robertson and his orchestra and occasionally Len Kaufman and his trio would have special dances. There have been political rallies, election polls, wedding receptions, and funerals all held beneath its roof.

Nelson Clow sold his store to Nick and Hilda Rotar in 1943 and moved to Kelowna.

Huallen also boasted a tennis court, a soft-ball diamond and an Athletic Club where boxing and club swinging were part of the activities. They even staged a rodeo at one time.

The Grande Prairie Livestock Co-op had a shipping point at Huallen and Nelson Clow was their first buyer, followed by Bill Russell and Tom O'Neil. Melvin Hart laughed about "Hank" who brought a cow to ship. "Hank" tied his team up in front of the store and went to mail some letters before unloading his cow. When he came out the cow had jumped over the box and was gone. "Hank" rounded her up and brought her in the next shipping day — when she got away again. Clow tried to rope her! She charged him so Hart and Zalling got into the fracas to herd her back. Hart picked up a stone and the cow charged him. He hit the cow on the forehead with the rock hard enough to slow her up while they beat a hasty retreat. "Hank" brought the cow in the third time bound, tied on a stoneboat.

There were plenty of tales told too of the long hours, the miserable roads and heavy sacks of grain that were loaded over the platform.

The Peace River Seed Growers set up a cleaning plant one winter at Huallen and men who were waiting their turn at the cleaner used the elevator office for a waiting room day and night. Hart was batching at the office at that time. One night when his place was full, to change over a bin, he trod on a man's stomach.

Now Lower Beaverlodge and Huallen have started to lose their identity as mail is delivered by rural route from Wembley, the electricity is brought to our doors with only a whisper heard in its organization, the telephone has gone underground and the old Telephone Mutual is no more. Children are vanned to school and the school stands forlorn and deserted. Long since the church affiliations have spread into nearby towns, the country elevators have given way to trucking and the roof of the old Huallen hall has fallen in.

But still the people are the same — where once pioneers squatted and settled virgin soil, sons and daughters have put down roots. Where once prairie trails wound their way, all weather roads unite the neighbours. And in a crisis every one can be reached in minutes for the ready help, that is the legacy of those sturdy pioneers.





Homer Jaque (L) and Gordon and Pauline Sherk (R) visiting Mrs. Jaque Sr. and Lloyd.

## THE JAQUE FAMILY

Edward Homer Jaque filed on the SW 17-71-9-W6 in the Lower Beaverlodge district in July, 1914. He and his brother, Lloyd and their father operated a livery stable in Clairmont and hauled freight from Mirror Landing near Smith. Before moving to the Peace River country they farmed near Bounty, Saskatchewan after emigrating from the States.

In 1917 Homer's parents and sister Pauline joined them at Lower Beaverlodge. In early 1918 their father went to Edmonton for an operation and passed away. Mother Jaque kept house for Lloyd for a couple of years afterwards, then went back to Cincinnati to be with daughter Ina when her baby was born. Later she returned to be with Pauline when Don was born. She stayed with Lloyd and Pauline in turn until she passed away.

On April 23, 1919 Homer married Louise Harris in a double wedding with his sister Pauline and Gordon Sherk. Louise had come from Yorkton, Saskatchewan in May of the previous year to stay with her brother George, who had homesteaded west of Beaverlodge.

Louise Harris was one of a large family and as such she had been well trained in all the attributes of a good homemaker. Besides turning out delicious meals, angel food cakes and breads, she was an accomplished seamstress. Many a neighbour wore her fashions with pride. Whenever she felt creative she would turn to her oil paints for diversion if she wasn't in the process of building herself a set of kitchen cupboards, upholstering a chair or directing a play with the neighbour's young people.

Homer and Louise raised three children: Mervyn, Joyce and Marion.

In the early years the Jaque home was a stopping place for people travelling from Elmworth, Rio Grande and Halcourt to Wembley and Grande Prairie. The farmstead was located on a beautiful spot overlooking the Beaverlodge River. The river flats were favorite picnic grounds.

After Mrs. Jaque Senior's demise in 1925, Lloyd moved to Washington State and Homer and Louise purchased his land as well as the Sinclair land across the river. Later Homer acquired a second homestead a few miles south. This land provided summer pasture for a small herd of beef cattle.

Homer and Louise had a mixed farming operation including a few milk cows, a beef herd, pigs, chickens,

turkeys and horses. Later tractor power replaced the horses for a major portion of the heavy work. Main crops were oats, barley, fescue and alsike clover.

The first automobile purchased by the Jaques was a 1929 grey Chevrolet coach. A favorite pastime of Lower Beaverlodge residents was to arrange a Sunday cavalcade of from three to five cars. The excuse might be berry-picking or just a visit to far-away places. On many occasions the return trip was made late in the evening in a summer rainstorm.

For some years Homer was chairman of the local school board and Dave Mackintosh the secretary. Dave, a bachelor would often visit the Jaque residence to talk school business and naturally would stay to relish Louise's good cooking.

For several years Homer helped maintain the Lower Beaverlodge road. He owned a share in the community threshing outfit, a portable seed-cleaning plant and a mounted wood saw. In mid-December, 1949 he had been away sawing wood for a neighbour and was returning home when his tractor and saw rolled off a small bridge. Homer was pinned beneath the tractor and died instantly.

In 1951 Mervyn, his wife Donna Moore of Lacombe and their two sons Jeryl and Donald sold their feedmill at Lacombe and purchased the home farm and an additional half-section from a neighbour. Daughter Joann was born in April of the following year.

In the eight years that Mervyn Jaque lived there, they were very active in community affairs, especially church and Home and School. Donna in particular was invaluable, not only in the local U.C.W. but also at Presbytery level where she was President for several years. Even after moving to High Prairie and Fairview she continued to serve the church loyally. In her own right Donna is an excellent oil painter and has sold many of her creations.

In January 1959 the family moved to High Prairie upon Mervyn's appointment as District Agriculturist.

In July 1960 Mervyn was transferred to Grande Prairie. The family lived there until July 1964 when Mervyn became principal of Fairview Agricultural and Vocational College.

In February 1967 he accepted the position of director of the 4-H and Junior Forest Warden Branch in the newly created Department of Youth and the family moved to Edmonton. Since then Joann is married. Her husband, Harvey Rickert is a supervisor with the





Homer and Lloyd Jaque harvesting—1919.

Alberta Department of Environment and Joann is a legal secretary. They own an acreage west of Edmonton.

After four years of University, Donald married Sandra Bevington and their son, Jon Liv is one of Louise's two great-grandsons. They live in Fort Smith, N.W.T.

Jeryl is still single and lives in Toronto, where he is in the management and consulting business.

When Merv purchased the home farm, Louise bought a house in Grande Prairie and moved there in 1951. She then had more time for her hobbies — plants, her paints, crafts and her home became a treasure house of her creations. She married Rowe Thompson who died shortly after. In February 1974 she sold her Grande Prairie home and moved to a condominium in Sherwood Park. This permits her to be near her son Mervyn who now owns an acreage a few miles away and daughter Joyce MacDonald. Joyce and her daughter Janice live in Edmonton. Joyce has taught school at the Namao Air Base north of Edmonton for a number of years. She has also taught in various other schools throughout the province, including Claresholm, Ponoka and Fairview.

Marion is married to Craig Kindree and they have four children, Linda (Mrs. Roy Cook), Judy, twins Ruth and Rick and a grandson, Jason. They farmed at Scotfield but recently moved to Calgary.

Louise who for so many years was accustomed to planting a large garden will now miss that opportunity. Condominium living had its advantages for senior citizens, however. There are lots of occasions for companionship. Cribbage, bingo, jigsaw puzzles, teas, fashion shows and bazaars are favorite pastimes, and the complex where Louise lives has a central mall filled with flowers.

#### THOMAS KENNEDY AND SON JIM

Thomas Kennedy and son Jim came to the Lower Beaverlodge district in 1910 and lived on the market road east of the Lower Beaverlodge school. To all and sundry passing by Tom would say, "Hi!" Nothing else! But if the passerby was a stranger, he'd add "What's your name? Where are you from? Got any baccar?"

Their claim to fame was the story of their pipe. They had only one between them. And the father, after letting Jim get it lit up, would say, "Jim is it going good?" And then he would take it away from him.

They left here in 1913 and went back to Niagara Falls where it is said that Thomas married Mrs. Elias Smith's mother. Jim had a poor leg and died shortly after they left.

#### MURRAY AND DON MACDONALD

Murray filed on land one mile east of the Huallen corner in 1920. His brother Don had come before him and had land further east along the present highway. Murray bought Ben Austin's quarter when the Austins moved into Wembley, then sold his homestead to Mervyn Simmons. The Ben Austin land was sold to the V.L.A. Murray married after he left here and worked as an electrician at the coast. They had no family.

Don proved up his land, then took a job with the Soldier Settlement Board and moved to Grande Prairie. He married Miss McDonald of Wanham and did no more farming after his marriage. No one recalls if there was any family. They moved to Edmonton where Don died.

#### DAVID R. MACKINTOSH

I was born in Inverness, Scotland in 1892. I came to Winnipeg in 1911 where I worked for three years. In October 1914 I headed for the Peace River country to take up a homestead that had previously been filed for me by proxy. I walked over the Edson Trail with my brother Dan and John Dewar who had met us at Edson with a pack horse. We loaded up the pack horse with supplies for the trip but had to leave a lot of stuff in storage. It was picked up later that winter when we could use the sleighs.

Dave Mackintosh checks over the gladioli at the Experimental Station.





The quarter I filed on was the SW 5-72-10-W6 which I sold shortly after proving it up. I took a second homestead at Aspendale in 1927 and lived with my brother Jim on a farm he purchased at Lower Beaverlodge. We worked together in partnership until he passed away in 1936.

In the fall of 1941 I sold my farm and went out to work as timekeeper for Canyon Creek Sawmills Ltd. at Spurfield, Alberta where I stayed for about five years. I also worked in horticulture at Beaverlodge Experimental Station for 11 years. I am now retired at 82 years and live in the Senior Citizens' Apartments in Beaverlodge.

Many of the visitors to the Experimental Farm in Dave's time came primarily to view his flower beds and the display of tuberous rooted begonias in the greenhouse. It was a show place and did much to brighten the thoughts of settlers who otherwise were engaged in a seemingly never ending struggle to develop their holdings.

### JAMES D. MACKINTOSH

James D. Mackintosh was born at Inverness, Scotland. He emigrated to the U.S.A. in 1910 and worked on ranches in Montana for several years. In the summer of 1914 he came over the Edson Trail along with John Dewar and filed on the SW 4-72-10-W6th, now owned by Jonas Webber. He also farmed his dad's place until it was sold in 1927. That summer he moved to Lower Beaverlodge where he bought the Hickey place and also took up a second homestead at Aspendale. Jim Mackintosh passed away May 1936 at the age of 50 years.



Jim Mackintosh thinking 30 acres behind a walking plow is a lot of walking.

Jim Mackintosh, Slim Baird and Sam Timmins, 1920.



Jim Mackintosh with coyote pups, 1917.

### CHARLES ORVAL MILLS AND FAMILY

Charlie Mills was born in Ontario of English parents. He left home at an early age, went to the United States and obtained employment with the Great Northern Railway. In time he was a train despatcher — a most responsible position.

In 1890 in Denver, Colorado, he met and married Emma Sundberg, a milliner by trade. She was born in Nebraska of Swedish parents. Charles' work took him from one city to another. Son Walter was born in Colorado, Jack in New Mexico, Leonard in St. Paul and Violet in Michigan.

In Havre, Montana, Charles took a homestead to give his boys a chance at outdoor life. There they were given music lessons and lived until they were old enough to file on land for themselves. Then the family came to the Lower Beaverlodge district. Charles' land is now the Clem Jacobs' dairy farm. The boys took land on the market road to Wembley where Bruno Kaut now lives.

The eldest girl, Violet, recalls that there was no school in their area when they arrived so her father and their neighbors formed a school board, petitioned the government and were able to build a small log building with a sod roof. This school was known as Hillhead and Miss Margaret McNaught was their first teacher. She rode her horse, Julius, to and from her home in the Appleton district weekends and boarded with the John Watsons.

About school Violet commented, "By the time we got warmed up in the winter months and ate our frozen lunches we were too sleepy to learn much."

Charlie found homesteading strenuous work after so many years at a desk. He went back to railroading and the boys kept the farm going. Emma and the younger children — Eva, Bessie and Harry who were born in Montana and Fern who was born in Wembley — would go to B.C. to be with father during the winter, "We all had railroad passes so the problem of transportation was easy — and lots of fun."

In 1920 they all moved to British Columbia and



returned only in the summer to tend the farm until as late as 1928. Charlie sold his quarter to Idan Thoreson.

While in this area the older children formed a family orchestra. This added a lot to the social life. They played the saxophone, trumpet, violin, and piano.

Violet remembers neighboring with the Waltons, Kennys, and Lawrences. She also remembers dancing at Jack Bullas' and at the Lower Beaverlodge school where there were a lot of friendly people — just like one big family. "We all took lots of lunch as the dances lasted until almost daylight. We often made coffee and ate again before going home."

Three of the boys passed on and Walter lives part-time in Seattle and part-time in Hawaii. One girl lives in California, Violet in Alberta, and the other two in Seattle. Emma and Charlie retired and moved to Seattle where they resided until 1943, when they both passed away in the same week.

### CARL MUIR

Carl Muir was a Swede who came to the Lower Beaverlodge district about 1926 and bought Jim Castleman's land two miles south of the Lower Beaverlodge School. He was a real craftsman with iron or tin. His neighbors said he could make anything and called on him to reshoe their sleighs, mend their machinery or build their eavestroughs.

Carl only used the kitchen lean-to of the house Castleman had built. The rest was used as a temporary community hall for card parties, dances and telephone meetings.

He stayed and farmed in this district until 1951 when he sold to Zalings. Carl didn't believe in banks so he took the cash from his sale with him when he left to return to Sweden. Relatives there were expecting him and when he didn't arrive they made inquiries. They found he had reached New York but after that all traces disappeared. It was rumored that he had been robbed and murdered.

### ART AND DELLA NORDSTROM

As a honeymooning couple of Norwegian and Swedish birth, the Nordstroms came to Alberta from Bismarck, North Dakota, stopping first at New Norway, near Camrose. They formed a friendship with the John Stokke family there and together they travelled to Grande Prairie in the spring of 1921. Tents on the banks of Bear Creek were headquarters until homestead houses were ready for occupancy in the fall.

The Nordstroms chose land north and west of the present site of Huallen, but in 1943 sold it and moved just east of the Beaverlodge cemetery. Gordon Cameron worked the farm after Art's death and later bought it.

Art was a snoose-chewing man with mechanical skills. His wife said he would lie in bed at night, listen to the cars and trucks going by on the highway, and tell her what was wrong with their motors. They did not own a car themselves until 1954, long after all their neighbours had them.

Mrs. Nordstrom loved to be with people and was a strong supporter of all the activities in the community — Women's Institute, Farm Women of Alberta, berry picking on Saskatoon Mountain, swimming in the

Beaverlodge river, directing or taking part in plays, or just visiting neighbours. Transportation was no problem for she loved horseback riding, or occasionally hitched their team of mules to buggy or sleigh.

Not people of great means, in their first years on the homestead the Nordstroms paid most of their grocery bills by supplying eggs and butter to merchants in Beaverlodge and Wembley. In 1924 they received from 20 to 40¢ a pound for butter, and from 10¢ a dozen for eggs in summer, to a high of 35¢ in the winter. In 1925 they received 30¢ a pound for turkeys. It cost them \$2.00 for 108 feet of rough lumber; 20¢ for two pounds of 3-inch nails; 60¢ for a pair of horseshoes; In 1925 a Big Ben clock cost \$1.00; a pair of overalls were \$2.75. Snuff was constant at 15¢ a box. In all her life on the farm, Mrs. Nordstrom used the same wood cookstove, with its two warming ovens, drop-down shelves for tea and coffee pots, and convenient reservoir for hot water.

The Nordstroms had no children and no relatives in the country, so Mrs. Nordstrom often "borrowed" friends' daughters for company. It was a treat to be invited. On one occasion the girls had taken their dolls. One pretend-hairdresser gave all the dolls haircuts, which provided amusing conversation for the adults, but tears of remorse for one little girl.

Mrs. Nordstrom was an accomplished seamstress and often helped her neighbours with sewing problems, but she also had many other interests. Carding wool for warm quilts, tanning hides to be made into wearing apparel, and developing her own snapshots



A ladies' gathering.



Mrs. Della Nordstrom.



were among them. She took a special interest in neglected graves at the cemetery nearby and many plants and flowers from her own garden were moved to the graves and tended by her.

Mr. Nordstrom had a team of gentle mules. When he helped neighbours with field work, the mules were part of the outfit. They were a novelty in the district and when the children saw the men coming in from the fields for meals, they would race out to be boosted on the mules' backs, just to watch their long ears flop as they jogged along.

Mr. Nordstrom passed away in 1962. In 1968, while staying with a niece at Armstrong, B.C., Mrs. Nordstrom died at the age of 83. They are both buried in the Beaverlodge cemetery, just a short distance from their old home.

#### MRS. ROSE PITTS

On May 4, 1915, the Grande Prairie Herald reported: "Mrs. Pitts of Edmonton arrived Sunday and expects to leave in a few days for Pouce Coupe. This will be a great relief to that district as heretofore they were far removed from medical attendance in cases of accident or sickness". A delegation of settlers had appealed to the British Columbia government for an appropriation to aid in securing the services of a nurse. They received \$500.

Mrs. Pitts' dream included a hospital for the area, but the bachelors saw no need, and the married men did not want their wives leaving home for maternity care, so when the appropriation ran out, Mrs. Pitts had no choice but to leave. Returning to Grande Prairie, probably in 1916, she became the third matron of the Katherine Pritty Hospital, which had been built

through the efforts of the Rev. and Mrs. Alexander Forbes. She was then 37 years old.

In 1916 Mrs. Pitts took out a homestead in the Lower Beaverlodge district, one mile north of the school. She had a house built by Doss Johnson, with the intention of making it a hospital for the sick who were far removed from the only other hospital in Grande Prairie. However the public did not seem to accept her offer and her only known patient was Doss Johnson himself. Mrs. Pitts was badly afflicted by deafness and this could have been the reason that she did not succeed with her plans. After her death in 1958, it was discovered that she had hospital supplies stocked in the upstairs rooms of her house, which she must have kept for over forty years. It would seem that she was always hoping her dream would come true and that she and her supplies would be needed.

Rose Kelly was born in Ontario in 1878, the youngest of 13 children born to Dennis and Amanda Kelly of Grantham. Her grandmother was the former Mary Secord, sister of the famous Laura Secord. Three of the Kelly children and both parents died before Rose was ten years of age. She was raised by older sisters, but was married to a Mr. Pitts by the time she was 17 years old. It is not known what happened after the marriage, but some recall photos of a man in a fireman's uniform, who was believed to be her husband. In any event, she was on her own in 1910 when she took nurse's training in Vernon, B.C. Photographs testify that Rose Pitts was an exceptionally attractive young lady, with a flair for stylish clothes.

Mrs. Pitts adopted a baby girl, Eunice, but kept her on the homestead with her for only a short time when she was a baby, and again in 1931 and 1932 when Eunice was 14 years old. She attended the Lower Beaverlodge school at that time but returned to Edmonton before her second year was finished. She was raised mostly in convents. With the exception of the times she had Eunice with her, Mrs. Pitts lived alone. She was considered an eccentric by most of the people who knew her, but when it is realized that she lived some distance from neighbors, was deaf, had no means of transportation except her own two feet, and received a very skimpy living from her farm, perhaps it is understandable. She relied on neighbors to do her farming on a share basis and sometimes kept a cow and chickens.

Eunice recalled a harvest experience. "The food was good and plentiful for mother liked to cook, but we had a white linen tablecloth and napkins on the table and far too much silver. The men used only what was necessary and pushed the rest aside. From the looks on their faces I got the message that we had done something wrong."

Mrs. Pitts' life was hard and lonely, but she had no desire to leave her farm except for trips she took to unknown destinations. She died on her farm in the golden days of autumn 1958 at the age of eighty. Eunice says her mother wanted to be buried on the farm, however she was laid to rest in the Grande Prairie cemetery.

Eunice joined the C.W.A.C. and went overseas in the early days of World War II, being stationed at Canada House, London, through the war. By chance

Mrs. Rose Pitts.





she was the lone C.W.A.C. on the 33rd Field Co. R.C.E. special train coming home. Newsmen made much of it, but to Eunice it was a lonely ride, each soldier having his own thoughts about coming home. "One lone woman having the facilities of one restroom to herself was enough to make me resented," she said. Eunice married an American and settled in El Cajon, California, where they had four sons born to them. Her husband died and she has recently remarried but still lives in El Cajon. Some of the former students of Lower Beaverlodge school will remember the tall red-head with the freckles and deep dimples in her cheeks and an independent nature. She wished intensely to be liked and have many friends.

#### HERBERT PRYKE

Herbert Pryke was a veteran of World War I and in April 1919, took up his duties on his homestead N.W. 23-71-9, where John Mayer lives today. A quiet, reserved Englishman, he affected the riding costume of the English gentlemen. He was painfully shy but nonetheless was usually found in the "crowd at the back" whenever community dances were in progress. If the toe-tickling music emboldened him to ask a lady to dance, his stiff military posture and lack of rhythm did little to endear him to the girls. He would also attend divine services but would be up and away before any of the good ladies of the congregation had a chance to invite him for the evening meal.

In 1930 he returned to England, and much to the surprise of the community brought back a tall, striking looking woman as his bride. However, Mrs. Pryke found the isolated pioneer life of the new west little to her liking. In 1939 they sold their land and household effects and returned to England. Once settled there Mrs. Pryke found an outlet for her talents in the managing of a small tobacco shop. Little more was heard of them until the news arrived that Herbert had been struck by a motor vehicle while he was out riding a bicycle, and had died from the misfortune. No further word has been heard from Mrs. Pryke. There were no children.

#### HARRY RAYNES

Harry Raynes came to the Lower Beaverlodge district in the winter of 1909 with Ivan Abricosovick. He was an Englishman and a bachelor. One neighbor recalls that he was a comical chap. He filed on S.E. 20-71-9 just east of Vic Flint's homesite. He had a spanking team of horses that were too fast for him. To slow them down he said, "I hobbled them fore and aft! But it just took 'em a few minutes to get into step again — and then they were off same as ever."

#### MELVIN ROLLINS

Melvin James Rollins was born at Tory Hill, Haliburton County, Ontario March 19, 1906 of English and Irish parentage. He was brought west with his parents, Bill and Annie Rollins to a homestead north of Biggar, Saskatchewan in the fall of 1908. In April, 1909 his young mother, only 23 years old died in childbirth, leaving three small children. The infant was adopted and the family didn't see him until he was a grown man of 22. In the summer of 1973, by meeting the right people at the right time, Melvin was able to find his



The Melvin Rollins family on Elaine and Clifford Werk's wedding day. Barrie, Buddy, Hugh, Dad, Mom, and Elaine.

mother's grave after 64 years, something which almost seems impossible.

Bill homesteaded in the Volin district near Spirit River in 1918. At the age 13 Melvin struck out on his own, first herding cattle at Fairview and then returning to Spirit River where he drove a livery team for Dan Vader at the time when there was heavy freighting over the abandoned rail grade to the B.C. Block. Many four-horse outfits came in pulling sleighs during the winter taking four and five days to make the round trip. Some of those sleighs went back loaded with groceries and supplies for those at home; others were empty because the money had been spent in the bar.

Melvin made railroad ties at Chisholm, Alberta when he was 16. He spent several winters in the bush for Cady and Evans at the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Mill at Mile 17, north of Sexsmith. He homesteaded in 1930 northeast of Prestville but gave it up while he was overseas during World War II.

In February 1936 he married Kathleen Whelan of Prestville at the Old Catholic Mission between Spirit River and Rycroft. It was 45 below that day. They had the promise of a job with Jack Bramwell, well-known grain buyer at Rycroft. He was paid \$20.00 a month plus meat and flour. Two people didn't use much of either but it was a job. Jack got a cow and calf and the Rollins borrowed a cream separator from friends, paying a pound of butter a week for its use. They lived just east of where Courtesy Corner is now. The house was a little old log building over-run with bedbugs. It was a constant battle to try to stay ahead of them — no DDT in those days. Jack got a potent fumigant, but it didn't seem to have much effect but to increase the fertility of the bugs. The mosquitoes were ferocious.

In the spring of 1937 they came to Beaverlodge, where Melvin worked for Hugh Thompson of Albright. Their first son, Barrie was born on April 30 of that year in the sub-hospital on the "Old Town Hill". In the hospital at the same time were Mrs. "Rusty" Olson with baby Ruth, Mrs. Percy Hunkin from Halcourt



The Rollins Family: Barrie, Dad, Buddy, Mom and Elaine. "The new rubber-tired trailer rode very smoothly."

with baby Robin, Mrs. Allen (Lenabelle) Moore, now Mrs. Johnny Johnson, with Margaret and a Mrs. Lucas of Elsworth.

That fall they moved to the "Siding" at Mile 17 where Melvin was yard foreman for Cady and Evans until September of 1939, when he joined the army. While they were there, there were several drastic changes in the lumber operation. The spring of 1938 was very dry and there were fires everywhere. One started in the bush at the tie camp several miles away. It burned the tie camp and in spite of much hard work it also burned the main sawmill and cook shack, etc. No one ever knew how it started but there was suspicion that it had been set to make work for some one. If that was so; it was a tough way to make a dollar. Melvin's wife and baby had gone down the railroad a short distance to the family of one of the section men, not knowing if they'd have to get out by hand-car or what have you. Afterwards it was a sad sight to see all those beautiful green trees just a blackened mass for several miles. The houses had blackened pine needles scattered all over the floors and furniture. The well was an open one that you pulled water out by hand and it tasted terrible, smoky and full of needles and ashes. Even the fresh milk from the cow tasted of smoke. There were fires around for six months. After this the logs were hauled by truck and the ties sawn, not made by hand.

Later when the passenger train came through there were several cars of Sudeten settlers on their way to Toms Lake. What a depressing sight it must have been for them! Later in the summer several car loads of lumber of various dimensions were shipped to the Sudeten people to build their homes and farm buildings.

After all the excitement of the summer of 1938, on December 12 Larry (Buddy) was born to the Rollins family at a maternity home in Sexsmith managed by Johanna Haakstad — a wonderful woman.

Melvin joined the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, the "49ers" on September 17, 1939 and moved his family to Rycroft. He went overseas with the second group of men to leave Edmonton in December 1939. It was happy news for those at home to hear that another contingent of Canadians had landed safely "somewhere" in England on New Year's Eve of 1939. It was to be over five years before he saw his family again.

He spent two and a half monotonous years in

England, except for false alarms when they were set to go to both France and Norway in the spring of 1940. He was among those who went to Spitzbergen in 1941. There was an important weather station there as well as coal mines. The Russians were evacuated to Archangel; when the transport returned, the military and Norwegian civilians started back to England.

The stock piles of coal caught fire, the fuel oil, mining machinery destroyed, the houses blown up, cattle and ponies shot. The weather station was kept in operation for a short time so the enemy wouldn't suspect. It too was demolished when they left on a destroyer to rejoin the transport. The reason for all this was because they wanted to keep a route open to Archangel as guns and supplies were being sent to Russia. Melvin was in charge of a detail who took care of the cattle. He sent one lad to feed chop to the cows and when he checked on him he found he had fed them the sawdust used for bedding.

Tired of the "waiting game" in England, Melvin got a transfer to the Forestry Corps up in Inverness, Scotland where he spent two years. Bill Sanderson of Beaverlodge was among his group. In the summer of 1944 he was back in England then over to Belgium. In December 1944 he was sent home on "rotation leave". The officer who told Melvin he was going home was as excited as Melvin. Melvin had been cleaning his gun and doesn't know if anyone ever finished cleaning it or not. He didn't! The area he was in when he left, was the Ardennes Forest where the "Battle of the Bulge" took place a few weeks later.

During his time overseas his family lived in the Albright area. Homecoming was a very happy occasion for everyone, especially his two small sons — one was only a year when he left. Kathleen met him in Edmonton and they arrived back in Rycroft December 23.

He got his discharge from the army in April. Through the V.L.A. he bought the Bruels' farm in the Lower Beaverlodge district where the family moved in October 1945. Three weeks later their only daughter, Elaine was born. In January 1949 Hugh was born, completing their family. They spent 11 years there among splendid neighbors. Reluctantly they moved to Beaverlodge in September of 1956 hoping to eventually go back to the farm but that wasn't to be. They sold the farm to Garth Koll in 1964.

They have been living on the "Old Town Hill" since 1960, first in the house that Mr. and Mrs. Paul Flint built and lived in many years ago and in 1964 bought Bob and Josie Cook's house. Melvin was employed at Foster's Seed and Feed for 11 years as a mill operator.

Their three boys live in Edmonton. Barrie is married to Lorna Douglas and they have three children, Cathy, Carrie and Kenny. Buddy is married to Linda Rycroft of Grande Prairie and they have one son, Trenton. Hugh, unmarried, has been in Edmonton for five years. Elaine, married to Clifford Werk, lives at Beaverlodge. They have two children, Gordon and Krista.

Melvin has been employed at CFS Beaverlodge since June, 1969 as a commissionaire. They feel they



have been fortunate to have had good neighbors, many friends and kind relatives over the years.

### JESSIE ROMINE AND FAMILY

Jesse Romine came to Lower Beaverlodge with his mother and stepfather, Mr. and Mrs. George Ferguson, from Montana in 1912. He, his stepfather, and half brother Claude, filed on land adjacent to Bill Romkey and Harry Staughton.

Jesse's family consisted of his wife, his daughter, Lona, then about 15 years old, Lorne, Harold, and twins Merle and Earl. They had to walk to the Lower Beaverlodge school.

Jesse augmented his farming income by mining coal at the Red Willow, and by freighting in the winter. For a time they left the homestead to run a stopping place at Wembley and afterwards went back to Montana, but returned shortly. In 1928 they left this district, this time for another homestead at Montney, B.C. when Lona and her husband, Bill Garlock moved there.

Latest reports say that Lorne, who had been sent back to the States, had been here as an American soldier during World War II. Mr. and Mrs. Romine have since died and Harold is on the homestead at Montney. Merle moved to New Brunswick, and Earl was taught carpentry and is making a very good life for himself. Lona has remarried and lives at Dawson Creek.

### WILLIAM ROMKEY

William Romkey came to Lower Beaverlodge in 1914 and filed on the land east of where his son, Guy, now resides. His home had been near Dartmouth, Nova Scotia where he left two sisters and three brothers. Only one brother ventured this far west. Bill stayed with Jim Bauman before marrying Gyda Thoreson in 1919.

Bill was a good boss and so it was natural for him to be chosen road foreman. The road foreman in the 1920's was responsible to the municipality for a certain section of the public road in his area, overseeing its construction, maintenance, repairs and improvements.

In the winter Bill had employment as a foreman with the Canyon Creek Lumber Co. — a job he held for 19 years.

This left his wife with the heavy responsibility of managing alone with their three children, Guy, Doris, and Percy. Gyda says what she remembers most about those early days was the loneliness and hardships they had to endure. She had to do chores, for everyone had his cow, chickens and pigs. She had to make the trips to town for groceries and mail. She managed rides with others somehow as she was always afraid of the horses.

Gyda's long winter evenings were put to profitable use. She had an auto-knitting machine and made socks, mitts and long stockings and sold them at the Kranz store in Wembley. She remembers, especially the long red and white ones she did for the hockey players.

She brightened though when she told how Guy had been baptised as a baby along with four others, all of whom were born in the early 1920's — Viola Edgerton, Beth Flint, Harry Sherk and Mervyn Jaque, quite a

coincidence in those days of sparse population. And she was not so isolated but that she was able to go to a neighbour, Mrs. Benson and help her when her baby was born.

Gyda recalls the fun of going to dances at Beaverlodge and Halcourt until their children were born. After that her husband's absence during the winter curtailed their participation in community events.

At an early age son Guy was putting his shoulder to the wheel. In the late twenties, the Romkeys bought Harry Staughton's land and Idan Thoreson's homestead. Guy put down roots on his grandfather's land, built a house and married Elfreda Werner. Their only son Murray died an untimely death at the age of sixteen. Doris lives with her mother.

Percy went overseas in 1942 and served in Holland, Germany and the Pacific War Zone. He returned a Lance Corporal in 1944 and bought the "Irish" Simon's land. His mother and sister moved in with him. In 1955 at the age of 32 Percy died as a result of a combine accident. In 1970 his land was sold and Gyda and Doris bought a house in Beaverlodge where they now reside.

### CARL ROPER

Carl came to the Lower Beaverlodge district in 1926 and batched on the quarter just west of Holmes Boyd.

Carl was of German extraction coming here from Hamburg, Germany after a brief stop-over in Saskatchewan for one harvest. Because of an ear injury received during the war he never really learned the English language but seemed to understand it. He was a good-natured, happy, bald-headed chap who delighted in hard work. He was also a notoriously poor teamster so when he worked for Sherks they always gave him their steadiest team. But even these wouldn't always obey his German word for Whoa! After several exasperating tries he could be heard shouting, "Ach Meinch! You hear hard!"

Carl was never known to have any other mode of transportation than his bicycle and found it quite adequate for his shopping and visiting. Carl loved to visit and even though the language was a barrier he could convey the latest gossip about the neighbourhood in some sort of manner. He was a very clean and a polite man and was welcome wherever he went. He generally had candy in his pockets for the youngsters and a twinkle in his eyes for the oldsters.

Carl always wore a chain necklace. He was deeply distressed once when he thought he had lost it. A neighbour drove him home to look for it — and he was endlessly grateful to find he'd forgotten to put it on again after a bath. We never did find out why the chain was so special.

Carl never owned any livestock or machinery. He was content to work for G. Rautenstrauch and let him put in his crop, or to get a bit of help the same way from Carl Muir. He worked for practically every neighbour in the district at one time or the other, on threshing outfits, stooking, cleaning grain or just doing chores. His extra earnings he invested in houses in Wembley and Mr. Rautenstrauch acted as his business manager.

Carl was fortunate to have a gravel pit on his land

and was able to realize a few dollars from that — although gravel was not as much in demand in his time as it is now.

Carl rented his land in turn to Holmes Boyd, G. Rautenstrauch and Val Goebel, eventually selling it to Gust Pfau. Carl moved into Wembley and lived there until his death in 1962.

### HUGH ROSS

Hugh Ross came here from Winnipeg, Manitoba for one purpose, and one purpose only — “to get away from people”, so he is reported to have said. He seemed dour and unsociable and yet we read in the early minutes of the first school meeting that he was the first elected secretary. It seems a confirmed fact though that his usual greeting to any wayfarer was “What’s on your mind?”

Ross brought cattle with him when he settled onto his land, N.W. 21-71-9, in 1910 and raised more. He usually had about 30 to 40 head and for those days that was a goodly herd. The cattle were sold for butchering — mainly to the meat market and restaurants in Lake Saskatoon. Later, when the railway construction pushed further west, he found the work crews in need of meat, too.

In 1927 he rented his land to Joe Kirchie. In 1928 Otto Grunski bought his land, four of his horses and his machinery. He had developed quite a sizeable herd of horses too, and took them to Wembley to sell by auction. He returned to Winnipeg that fall where he was rumored to own some property.

### NICK AND HILDA ROTAR

Alex Rotar, Nick’s father, came from Austria in 1910 speaking only the Ukrainian language. He married Mary Dmetrichuk in Winnipeg and in 1921 they moved to Saskatchewan to farm. They had a family of six boys and as there appeared little future for the boys where they were, they were enticed to Alberta on hearing of the free homesteading land at Hines Creek. In 1928 Alex filed on his land, built a house, barn and chicken house. Then he brought the rest of his family in 1929.

Nick, the second oldest was born in 1914 and when

he had finished his Grade 8 he went out to work. He sent money home to help the family. When he was old enough to file he homesteaded too and proved up his land. Gradually he was able to buy a tractor, then a threshing machine and a wood sawing outfit with which he did custom work.

In 1941 Nick married Hilda Kaut. In 1943 when her folks moved to Wembley, Nick decided he’d had enough of bush farming. He sold his land and equipment and bought the Hualien country store from Nelson Clows.

Hilda had come from Poland in 1930 at the age of five with her parents and younger sister. When they arrived at Montreal they knew no English and the only friendly beings were the bed-bugs in the immigration hall. They had to sleep with the lights on to keep the bugs away. Their destination was Hines Creek where relatives were already settled.

Hilda, young as she was, remembers their first soddy house built of poles tied together at the top and covered over with sods. The only light in the place was a window in the door. From their meagre cash, \$150, her father bought a cow for \$100 and a stove for \$20. They began at once to clear their land and to square logs by hand. Hilda says she can still see her folks sawing the logs with a whip saw. They built braces high above their head — marked their logs top and bottom — pushed and pulled the saw along the straight marks.

Hilda’s memories were not unhappy but to indicate what privations people were able to endure and still survive. Their soddy house was lighted mainly by a wick in used grease. Coal oil was reserved for reading and sewing. She and her sister slept in a wicker trunk which was used for a table at meal time. She remembers her clothes were hand made from flour sacks or made over from “barrels” of used clothes sent from the U.S.A. Lutheran Church. Rabbits were their main source of protein and berries and mushrooms were gathered avidly when in season.

As time went by her father used his talents to build his house and outbuildings and augmented his meagre money supply by putting new bottoms in wooden tubs, manufacturing spinning wheels at \$9.00 a piece, mak-





ing wooden clogs and being the coffin maker of the district. Hilda's mother lined the coffin with satin and made the pillows. The finished product cost \$5.00. When the winters were really rough they got \$9.00 a month relief.

At 9 years of age Hilda started school not knowing a word of English. She remembers walking to school in early spring. They took short cuts through the brush so would take off their shoes to cross the sloughs. Their feet got pretty cold so they'd piddle in a puddle to warm their feet.

At 9 years of age Hilda was considered capable of looking after her little brothers, milking the cow and helping bind and stook the grain her mother cut by hand. At 16 she was considered capable of homemaking. She and Nick Rotar were married in 1941. They purchased the local store at Huallen in 1943.

With only \$3000 to make his down payment on the store Nick had to go to work on the Alaska Highway leaving Hilda and baby Doris to tend the store. Hilda felt hopelessly inexperienced, scarcely knowing the prices of her produce or how to re-order. But local farmers and their wives were very helpful and didn't take advantage of her. And so she learned.

She also learned that she couldn't leave her baby in the house or have her in the store so she had to take her to her mother during the week, leaving Hilda very lonely. She was so grateful to John Mayer for taking the trouble to drive to her mother's one day and bring the baby to her for a short afternoon. She said, "I could have hugged him! I was so glad somebody cared!"

The Rotars didn't have the Huallen post office until 1947. That year was the year they lost their old store building by fire. They had been providing their own electricity with a Delco plant in the basement and it was presumed the plant was the cause of the fire. They used an old garage for their business until their new 40 x 60 foot building was ready.

Nick and Hilda were also increasing the size of their family and when six of their final seven were born they built housing accommodations onto the back of the store. Nick continued to work out, trucking, threshing, welding for local farmers and general fix-it man.

Hilda loved to meet the public. She enjoyed the gay banter and jokes of shoppers as they visited and gossiped, matching to see who would buy the Cokes became a habit. Hilda recalls the day one of her customers came in with her hair in curlers and who in her haste had sprayed her hair with furniture polish. Another time Hilda was trying to cook a meal and wait on customers; so rushed was she, she cooked her precious mushrooms in liquid detergent instead of oil.

Hilda says, "Good roads and bigger stores have taken away much of our business. The closing of the post office in 1970 and the elevators in 1972 took their toll of our business too". The community would miss a lot if that little country store was to shut its doors.

The Rotar family of seven are almost all gone from the parental home. Four are married. Doris married Ray Tschetter of Hythe and he works in the pulp mill at Hinton. They have three children. Ethel married Larry Koester of Calgary and they have two girls.

Marvin married Lorna Olsen. They have no children. He is a T.V. technician at Prince George. Marlene married Tom King of Hay River, N.W.T. — a licensed welder and they have two children. Glen, 18, is at Calgary with Canadian National Telecommunications. Elvie and Tannis, 15 and 12 are still at home.

In 1965 the Rotars bought Bill Russell's two quarters but have since sold one to Harry Snatic. They have been very active in their Jehovah Witness church work since 1957 and are staunch supporters of activities in the Huallen hall, Hilda now being the secretary. The Rotars one concern right now is "Shall we close the store?"

#### **THE SHERK STORY — by Don Sherk and The Clan**

On July 14, 1909 a wagon train of 31 settlers from Ontario, a party which had crossed half a continent in search of new homes, finally found what they wanted at Beaverlodge, Alberta. (see the Burnsight Story) Among this group was the Amos Sherk family.

Family tradition has it that Amos and Candace were lured away from crowded family holdings in the Welland County by the promise of room for growth in the west. But perhaps the pioneer urge was innate: in the preceding two centuries the family had undergone two major migrations, one from Europe to the United States to escape religious persecution and the other from the U.S. to Canada as United Empire Loyalists.

In any case here they all were, Amos, Candace, and family—Gordon, twins Marley and Maud, and Lulu. The oldest daughter Alma was married to John Bilz of Chicago, Illinois. Amos' life long desire had been to be a carpenter and Maud's ambition had been to be a school teacher. Gord's suspicion was that they had "rocks in their heads!"

After squatting near Beaverlodge the Sherk family lived in tents until January, 1910. When winter set in they had insulated the tents by packing hay around the walls. They moved into their log house as soon as it was finished. Because the country wasn't surveyed until the summer of 1910 the Sherks measured out an area of land by tying a rag marker to a wagon wheel and counting the revolutions. This proved fairly accurate, although probably not quite square with the world. They settled on section 16-71-9 and the north half of 9-71-9-W6.

At first Candace and the two girls did the laundry with a scrub board and a large bread mixing pan. On special occasions an iron could be borrowed from Mrs. Mac Miller, three or four miles away. The first year butter was made with a dasher in a cream can. For the women, churning, washing and molding the butter, and hanging it in the well house to cool was the big job every week. Any spare time was spent picking saskatoons and raspberries or preparing beef for canning. Soon the work load was lightened slightly by the acquisition of wash tubs, a "push and pull" "armstrong" washer and a barrel churn.

Farming equipment was harder to come by. Since everything had to be dragged in by horses over the Edison Trail, the first steam engine and threshing machine used on Amos Sherk and Sons farm was co-operatively owned by the whole community and



An Indian encampment south of Sherks, 1912.

because any breakdown would necessitate a three months trip to Edmonton, certain people were assigned to become specialists in the care of each piece of equipment and no one else was allowed to work on it. As "Happy" Fletcher remarked about the keeper of the fanning mill, "He'd no more let you touch that than he'd let you touch his piano, and the closest thing he had to a piano was a wash board".

With farming equipment available, Broadview Farm, as the Sherk land is still known, was an extraordinarily busy place. Work began at 5 a.m. every day except during harvesting when it started earlier. Neighbors recall Amos never crossing the road without two pails in his hands and one on his arm. Amos and his sons were meticulous farmers. They dug up every plant of fox-tail even on their road allowances. They were experts at mortising the corners of log buildings and were incensed by a crack at the joint; they took great pride in their animals, particularly in their Clydesdales. The whole family mourned the death of a cow and calf during calving and an ox which dropped dead the first time it worked on the land. For the first few years Marley and Gord worked winters too, earning extra cash by freighting supplies, mostly flour and staples for Gaudin's store.

Of course they couldn't have endured this rigorous life without some fun. The community picnics at Lake Saskatoon (the origin of the Old Timers' Picnic) and the Wembley Fair were annual high lights. In the summer there were baseball and basketball games and dances at various houses, but winter was the most sociable season. Foot-warmers made long sleigh rides to card parties possible and a lot more comfortable.

No story of the Sherk Brothers would be complete without some comment about their hearty, jovial laughs, their pleasure in their driving horses, Goldie and Silver and the fun they had squiring the school teachers about the country to the dances.

Travelling didn't become easier until Amos bought one of the districts' first automobiles, a McLaughlin touring car. It had a peak speed of about 20 miles per hour on dirt roads and it was so undependable that the Sherks always carried wooden blocks with them. Then, if the car stopped on a hill, Candace could jump out and block the back wheels while Amos struggled to set the hand brakes.

Long before the car arrived, the visiting had had happy results for the Sherks. Maud was married to Garnet Truax in 1914. Five years later Gord married Pauline Jaque in a double ceremony with Pauline's brother Homer and Louise Harris. Lulu married

Charlie Edgerton in 1916. Marley didn't marry until 1932, after Elizabeth Zimmerman had arrived from Poland and had come to their place to give his mother some help.

From the time that Gordon's wife, Pauline first accepted Miss Agnes Melsness, the local "school marm" as a boarder until the school closed its doors in 1952, the Sherks boarded the teacher.

The Sherks were as diligent in their community efforts as in their farming. The first rural telephone communication was established amongst the family—the sound being carried over the barb wire fence. This system eventually included the neighbors and was finally extended to a central in Beaverlodge. Broadview Farm was the first rural subscriber in the Peace River area to have electricity installed. Amos and Gordon were both school trustees, Gordon was a long time member of the Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital board. He was also the first president of the Old Timers' Association. For years he was chairman of the Lower Beaverlodge Mutual Telephone Co., and active in the original U.F.A. organization.

In 1950 Gord and Marley were honored by receiving the Robertson Associates' Award for achievements in pedigreed seed production. Besides playing the piano for church, Pauline worked for the Red Cross, capably knitting, reading and churning at the same time. Gord's elocution contributions were much enjoyed. Betty's talents of sewing, knitting, cooking and gardening brought her many awards at the county fair. Amos died in 1935, six years after he and Candace had celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Twenty-five years before he had been a squatter; he died a prosperous farmer, perhaps because of his belief that you should "spend this year what you made last". Candace died in 1938.

Marley and Gordon carried on at Broadview Farm, operated in partnership as Sherk Brothers. Pauline, Gordon's wife, passed away in July 1953. In 1956 Marley and Gordon retired from farming and moved to Grande Prairie. Gordon's son Donald and his wife Phyllis (Christopherson) took over control of Broadview Farm at that time and are still growing pedigreed seed grain and running a small herd of beef cattle.

Don and Phyl have three children. Lloyd took his university at R.M.C. Kingston, Ontario and graduated in Engineering. He is now training to be a pilot in the Canadian Forces. Rena, who is a graduate of MacEwan College is working as a librarian in Edmonton. Terry attends the Beaverlodge Regional High



School. The children, in earlier years were active in Sunday School and for several years were members of the 4-H Light Horse Club. The girls took an active part in the public speaking and several times competed for the prizes.

The annual Grande Prairie County Fair is a must around Broadview Farm, and Terry is still actively competing with her horses. Don has served on the Fair Board for many years and was awarded a life membership in the Grande Prairie Agriculture Society in 1970. Don was secretary of the Lower Beaverlodge Telephone Co. for several years and also served as line repairman until the line was installed underground in 1972. Phyllis was superintendent of Sunday School at Beaverlodge United Church for many years and has been active on the Church Board and the U.C.W. Growing pedigreed seed is the main enterprise on the farm and Don is now in his third year as director on the Alberta Branch of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association.

Gord and Pauline's older son, Harry, principal of the Beaverlodge schools from 1959 to 1961 and his wife Edna (Humphrey) have three daughters, Candace, Marilyn and Eileen. Candace is married to Arthur Savage; both are university graduates. Marilyn is attending university and Eileen is presently in grade 12. Harry obtained his Doctorate of Education and is employed with the Department of Education. They reside in Edmonton.

Marley and Betty have three children. The eldest, Nora, graduated as a registered nurse in 1954 and in 1955 married Robert Trottier, a chemical engineer from Edmonton. Robert was killed in a car accident in 1957 leaving two children, Patti and Robert junior. In 1962 Nora married Ian Hassall, a paint contractor in Grande Prairie. Lisa and Gary joined the family in 1963 and 1966.

Shirley, a Home Economics teacher, married Virgil Henderson, a T.V. Technician of Grande Prairie. They have three children, Sherri, Ronald and Tammy, all of whom are in school.

Norman, a construction contractor, married Rose Webber and lives in Valleyview, Alberta. They have four children, Danny, Darren, Skye and Crystal. All are still in school.

Gordon passed away in the summer of 1968. Marley and Betty now reside in Grande Prairie where they keep busy with their lush garden and community activities.



Marley Sherk with Goldie and Silver.



Gordon Sherk on the Trail.



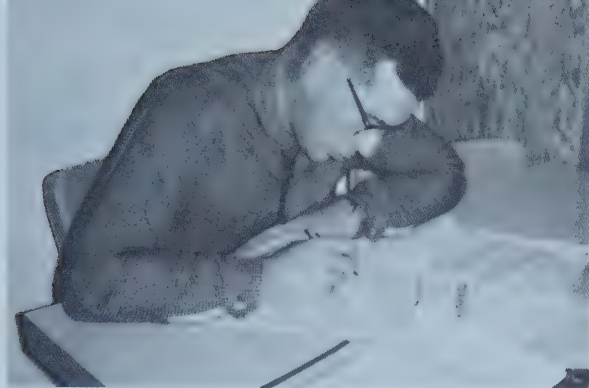
The Sherk clan gathering—1955.

Arnold Johnson and Gordon Sherk at the Old Timers' Picnic.



The Beaverlodge Industrial Co. threshing outfit in 1911. Freightened over the Edson Trail.





Need any help Don?



Double wedding of Gordon Sherk to Pauline Jaque and Homer Jaque to Louise Harris. 1919. Rev. Forbes (centre).



Don Sherk off for a ride on Tiny.



Shower for Edna (Humphrey) Sherk and Marjorie (Coe) Edgerton at Old Lower Beaverlodge School, 1942.



The County Fair Parade, Robert Trottier, Don Sherk, and Lloyd Sherk, 1967.



Mrs. Don Albright and Gordon Sherk at Old Timers' Picnic Lake Saskatoon.



Mr. and Mrs. Amos Sherk, Golden Wedding, 1929.

#### **LEROY AND ELIZABETH SHISLER**

LeRoy Shisler was born in Sherkston, Ontario in 1884. His father was a small farmer there as well as being a house builder and owner of a stone quarry. Roy married Elizabeth Jane Sills of Tweed, Ontario in 1907. At the time he was a part-time foreman and paymaster at his father's stone quarry.

In 1909 Amos Sherk and his family were going West. Mr. Sherk invited his nephew, Roy Shisler and his wife





Mrs. Roy Shisler and son Glen 1911.

to go with them. The Shislars accepted the offer for they felt that it would be a chance to build a better future.

Travelling with the Sherks in a group known as the Burnsites, but on the trail dubbed the "Bull Outfit", as the youngest married man, Roy followed along with the decisions of the others most of the time. He was not a member of the Burnsie congregation but he found them to be a highly respected and honest people who lived up to their religious beliefs.

Mrs. Shisler kept a diary on the trail and when they arrived at Athabasca Landing she was fascinated with the large amount of mail in this remote corner of the world. "When the steamer unloaded the mail there were no less than two large wagons just heaped up. I counted 30 bags and some was loaded before I started counting." However, when they arrived ten days later at Sawridge, mail had arrived there too, among it a letter for Doll. It told of her mother's death in Ontario and she was very broken-up over the news. Shortly after, the Shislars and Sam McNaught left the group, continuing on their own towards Beaverlodge.

When they arrived at Spirit River there were a number of children in the settlement and the parents persuaded Mrs. Shisler to stay and teach them. She had been instructing the young children in the Bull Outfit when time permitted on the trip, as she had taught in Ontario. At Spirit River she lived with the Brooks family, one of whose daughters was named Peace River Brooks.

Roy's first choice of land was in the Red Willow area to the west of Beaverlodge. It was a nice location near a pond. Sam McNaught spent the winter with him there, while Mrs. Shisler taught at Spirit River. The men built a house but in the spring Roy found that the land was mostly muskeg and not suitable for farming.

A neighbor was hunting on Nose Mountain at one time during the winter, and became lost. He explained his predicament to Roy later in these words, "Someone had been monkeying with Nose Mountain. It wasn't there."

Deciding he didn't like the Red Willow location, Roy chose open, rolling land next to his Uncle Amos Sherk's. To get started in farming, he borrowed money to buy a scrip, but also took out a homestead.

"My scrip had quite a grove of trees, which I thought was a nice background for our house. We built it of fire-killed logs from the banks of the Beaverlodge river. Howard Henry and Elias Smith helped me put up our buildings, and afterwards Howard used my

team to work his land as payment for his services. I paid Mr. Smith in cash.

"Our house consisted of a living room and kitchen combined, two bedrooms and an addition only partly finished. The bedrooms were small — like holes in the wall. We had a storehouse with cellar, separate from the house, and a barn.

"We took a couch, cook stove, dishes, linen and boxes of dried fruit among our belongings from Ontario. Other supplies were bought in Edmonton. Mother sent a big tub of apple butter to us one time that was a real treat. Later, Hugh Allen (my wife's brother-in-law) brought in a piano for us.

"I also had a house and barn on the homestead quarter. We lived part-time in each for the first two years, as part of the homestead regulations but the last year, I'd just go over to the homestead to sleep at night and my wife stayed in the other house.

"I certainly wasn't a farmer and my only experience from my father's farm might have been cultivating some corn on his 40 acres. When it was time to break my scrip, I exchanged work with the Sherk boys — Marley and Gordon — and usually got the best of the deal. Henry Patterson plowed 30 acres on my homestead for me and gave me some cattle in exchange for my team of oxen.

"My first and last crop wasn't much. Oats was all I grew. I didn't have money for fences and stray horses would get in the crop. I cut wild hay and sold it to Bob Tilt, who had a stopping place and restaurant at Lake Saskatoon. Everything I grew on my land I fed to my cattle, pigs, and horses.

"Our son Glen was born on the homestead on October 23, 1911. Dr. Arthur Bradford attended, assisted by Miss Agnes Baird, the district nurse. Glen was the first white boy born on the prairie. I think I paid the doctor cash for his services but didn't pay the nurse, as she was paid by the Presbyterian church.

"We left the Peace because of my wife's health. She had had one baby and was expecting another. The work was so hard and since she wasn't well, I didn't think it fair to keep her there, although I liked the country, the work and the life.

"When we left in 1913, I sold everything we had for \$2,500. This included seven or eight horses, cattle, pigs, and furniture. The sale lasted until ten o'clock at night. Prices were very high and I doubled my money on everything. It was one of the first sales in the country and people needed everything I had. There was no regular auctioneer in the area and I believe Elias Smith auctioned for me. Much credit was given but the people were very honest and every note was later paid."

Two of Mrs. Shisler's sisters had come west in 1911 — Mabel, as Mrs. Hugh Allen, and Frances Sills. Frances stayed with the Shislars and returned to Ontario with them, but returned to Beaverlodge in 1915 as Victor Flint's bride.

The Shislars lived in Ontario for a time, then moved to Buffalo, New York. They had three sons and two daughters. The Peace River baby is now living in Akron, New York.

Mrs. Shisler passed away in 1949. In 1967 Roy

moved to Tucson, Arizona, where, at 90 years of age, he still resides.

### IRISH SIMMONS

Mervyn Simmons came from Ireland and so was best known as "Irish" Simmons. He was a barber by trade, and when he landed in the state of New York and gradually drifted west we hear of him working for the telephone company in Calgary under Charlie Anderson, now of Hythe. He came to the Lower Beaverlodge district in 1914 and had a few head of cattle. One chap relates that when "Irish" was threshing with Happy Fletcher at Hythe he would come home at night to feed and water his cattle—and be back at the outfit in time for breakfast.

One fall Irish had bought a herd of cattle from a chap at Bear Lake. It had taken most of his savings so he didn't want to take the calves along with the cows. However after herding his cows three or four miles down the road the cows and calves decided they should be together. The owner begged Irish to take the calves at a sacrifice price and Irish really "strapped" himself to take them all. He claimed he only had \$6.00 left and with this he bought two woolen blankets and asked Mrs. Romkey to make them up into underwear for him.

Irish didn't have water to winter his beef so he rigged up a metal snow-melting trough and built a fire under it. This took a lot of dry wood and so he spent each day hauling wood, shovelling snow and trying to get some rest. He put bells on a couple of the cows and when the trough got low he would hear the cows with the bells on them butting around the tank. This was Irish's alarm clock and he'd have to be up by 4:00 a.m. shovelling and firing and hauling wood again for another day.

The next spring when a Jewish cattle buyer was going through the district looking for cattle for sale, Irish told him, "10,000 or nothing!" And he got it! When the cattle were gone Irish climbed on his mule and rode to Lake Saskatoon to deposit his cheque. The lady at the teller's window was aghast. She rushed into the manager's office and gasped, "There's a dirty little old man out there that rode up on a mule and he wants to deposit this cheque for \$10,000."

In 1927 Irish sold his land to Jake Heikel and bought a quarter of land in the Hinton Trail area—then sold that about four years later and bought Wesley Bell's land on the highway. Irish was known for his wheeling and dealing and is known to have said, "I'd sell any damn thing on the place if I could make a profit on it."

He is supposed to have bought a horse from Jack Abel. Jack's reputation wasn't too good so Irish was leary of the sorrel mare. But she looked as though she'd make a good mate for one of his. He gave Jack half the price he asked and turned the mare into the pasture. A couple of days later the police came asking if he'd bought a sorrel mare from Abel. "Yep!" "Can we see her?" "Yep! You sure could but that horse is long gone—probably eating apples in the Okanogan by now!"

Irish was the sort of man about whom there was always a good story. One has it that he decided to go back to Ireland but wanted to go as a "rootin' tootin"

Westerner. So he bought hat, boots, and six-shooter and arrived at Ireland's portals only to be told he couldn't take his gun in. "Then I ain't goin' in either", he said and returned to Canada.

But one time he did enter the land of his birth and brought back to Canada his Mollie out of Belfast. This was about the same year as he bought the Bell land. Mollie was a handsome girl with rosy cheeks and a twinkling eye. She had a flair for clothes and was an extremely fine seamstress as many of her neighbours discovered. To Irish and Mollie were born two children, Mervyn and Inez.

Around 1944 Irish sold his land to Percy Romkey and bought a house in Grande Prairie. Here he did odd jobs, raised fantastic gardens and made a specialty of growing roses and flowers.

The boy Mervyn married and worked on a construction outfit out of Camrose. He was killed in a car accident while there. Inez married Dave Bauman and they live at Chetwynd.

Irish died in Grande Prairie and we have lost track of Mollie's whereabouts.

### THE S.S.B. QUARTER

The quarter of land just north of Ken Edgertons was known as the S.S.B. Quarter and for some years brought variety and interest to the district. The policy was that Old Country soldiers were "settled" on a quarter section with a house, two horses, a pig and a cow. None of the men we knew were very knowledgeable about farming and so stayed only a very short time.

An Englishman, Peek, with his wife Lib and baby son were the first to arrive. He had a grand dream of building a log hotel into the bank of the creek on his farm. For many years the gaping windows of the unfinished edifice leered out onto an unsympathetic world. Lib couldn't get used to crossing the creek on the foot bridge or to bundling up her baby against the cold. The boy was often seen out running about in only a diaper in the chilly days of fall. They stayed only a couple of years.

The Scrivens, with two children, also came from England. He tried to break land on the rocky hillside with a gang plow but was thrown off so many times that he walked behind, with the tails of his army greatcoat flapping out in the wind. His wife, feeling sorry for him, tried to do the milking. Once the cow kicked her so badly that she was confined to bed for four days. They both felt that "Canada was a horrible place". When the snow came they were sure of it and left in February after being here less than a year.

George Carrick, his wife and two children, "Wee Dood" and "Phemie", stayed longer. Their second year here, they had a good crop. They had Cantlo Bagnell thresh the grain and George hauled it to the elevator as it was threshed and sold for a good price. Then he quietly sold his horses, pig, and cow and went silently back to Scotland with the whole tidy sum — forgetting to pay the S.S.B.

George Carrick was an accomplished Piper and many an evening concert his neighbors enjoyed as he played on the hillside. Ken Edgerton recalls one noon that Carrick's pipes badly frightened his father's



horses while he was hitching them for the afternoon work. On another occasion the Edgertons had prepared a surprise birthday party for father Charles. He was out milking when the guests arrived so Carrick took his pipes to the barn and struck up a tune just outside the cow barn. It was a "real surprise to say the least".

Joe Jensen, his wife, two sons, Carlson and Lavere and baby girl Eileen, were the next to live in the S.S.B. house. The sons were nearly grown and worked out a lot. Joe had another quarter near Wembley and worked both quarters. They were here only a year or two, then moved on to Dawson Creek. From there, we hear that not only Mr. and Mrs. Jensen are dead but also the little girl, Eileen.

Otto Grunski rented the land after that. Melvin and Lois Koll with their two wee children lived there one winter while Melvin helped Buck Schanuel mine coal at Canyon Creek.

The land has been sold to the Edgertons and the buildings have been moved.

### THE STEGMEIER STORY

John and Jacob Stegmeier were of German extraction. Their parents had come from Germany as children to Rochester, New York. Their father, Mathias, was a shoemaker and cobbler by trade and both Jake and John learned the shoe making trade from him.

Jake wanted to see the world. He joined a travelling circus, learned to ride a unicycle, perform acrobatics and put his flair for entertaining to good use. In his rollicking about the country he heard of the new land available for homesteading in the Peace River country. He interested brother John and from Edmonton the two trudged in over the 500 mile Slave Lake trail to see it for themselves. In 1912 John filed on S.W. 21-71-9 and Jake took N.E. 15-71-9, one mile north of the old Lower Beaverlodge school.

The next year they walked back out and Jake's son Fred recalls his dad telling how hungry they were. When they came to a stopping place, northeast of Edson, the keeper refused to give them food at any price. He claimed it was because the Stegmeier boys were going out and he was keeping his scanty supplies for those going in to the new country. Even the rabbits were hungry; when the boys woke up one morning the rabbits had eaten the brims off their hats.

In Edmonton they obtained a year's supply of food, a team of oxen and a sleigh. They teamed up with Hugh Allen and John Walton — John driving for Walton and Jake hauling a piano for Allen, who was bringing it in for his sister-in-law, Mrs. Roy Shisler.

For six years the Stegmeier brothers were gay, carefree young blades who enjoyed the freedom and informality of the west. John cobbled shoes and mended harness and Jake cut hair. On Sundays their talents were much in demand. They found time to join their bachelor friends at Jake Glessners and have their fun among the "Sons of Rest". One lady recalls the Stegmeiers as being the best looking and the most eligible bachelors in the district.

In 1918 Jacob returned to Rochester where he had left a pretty lass, who had told him when he left,

"You'll know where to find me." Caroline Hoff, also of German extraction, and a member of a large Lutheran family, had from a very early age been taught the art of sewing. So skilled did she become that when Jacob came to claim her hand she had become head tailor for Stein-Blocks and Co., the top tailors in New York in those days. Caroline was a fine manager besides having a flair for making and wearing her own clothes. At one time Jacob had sent her a beautiful coyote pelt and she had had it tanned and made into a beautiful fur piece that was the envy of her Rochester friends. That piece is now over 65 years old and still in good repair.

While Jacob had been in Rochester, John Folster had rented his land, so when Jacob and Caroline arrived with her many trunks of clothes and a trunk of shoes, their house was occupied. They moved into John's little log shanty with the sod roof. Caroline had been used to much better things and this type of life she only tolerated — along with Jake's friends who still came Sundays for hair cuts and shoe repairs. It wasn't until baby Helen was born in 1921 and she saw the dust sifting down from the sod roof on her baby's face that she declared an ultimatum, "Either there'll be a better house right now or I'm going back to Rochester with my baby." There was a new house and Helen recalls that in that new house her father made her the loveliest little pair of pumps a girl could wish for.

In 1923 John left and went to Prince George. Rumor had it that he was looking for a bride but he never married. At Prince George he worked as a hi-rigger in a logging mill. He had a bad accident to one of his shoulders. When it was somewhat better he took his compensation money and went back to Rochester where he bought a truck and delivered coal in the city. He returned to the Peace in 1950 and died in 1958.

In 1927 Jake and his family moved to his homestead so that Helen would be closer to school. Frederick was born there in 1928 with friend Mrs. Bernard as mid-wife. Mrs. Bernard and Mrs. Stegmeier had much in common, both missing big city life. About once a year they'd board the train to Grande Prairie, take a hotel room and treat themselves to shopping, shows and restaurant meals. The Bernards and Stegmeiers shared many family get-togethers with cards, especially King Pedro, which kept them up to the wee sma' hours.

When the railway was being built from Wembley to Hythe the construction crew located their equipment on Jake Stegmeier's land. When the road-bed was well advanced Jake began using it as a short cut to town. The foreman reprimanded Jake severely and Jake heard him out then replied, "Your equipment is on my land without permission. I'll use your road as long as you use my land." He wasn't molested again.

In 1926 the Stegmeiers decided to quit farming. "I know I'm not a good farmer," Jake said with a twinkle in his eye. They sold the homestead to Jacob Heikel and Jake took off for the States to find a new home for his family, while Mrs. Stegmeier and children stayed with Bernards. It wasn't long before Jake was back. Evidently he had forfeited his American citizenship by homesteading in Canada. He bought land on the river



just across the road from the Cassitys. From here Fred and Helen finished their grade schooling. The Stegmeiers continued to farm until 1958 when they retired to Wembley. They still had a quarter across from Gordon Cameron where Jake built a cabin to which he hoped to move but never did. By now Mrs. Stegmeier was enjoying spending winters in Banff with Helen, while Jake batched. The spirit of early days still persisted and Carl Roper knew when Mrs. Stegmeier was away as Jake ran up a white flag — a sign that meant “For Men Only.”

Jake was always very active and rode his bicycle daily in the summer. He had a two-year sojourn in the Auxiliary hospital in Grande Prairie. He wasn't so ill though that he couldn't scare the nurses by doing handstands on the end of his bed. In 1966 Caroline and Jake moved into Central Park Lodge. They lived there for six years. Jake true to his nature, at 89 years of age was doing a step dance for his doctor, two hours before a sudden heart attack stopped his dancing feet for all time. Caroline lived on at the lodge until October, 1973 when she died at the age of 88 — a good Christian woman who saw her duty and did it nobly.

Helen married Arlo Jurney in 1940 and they had one daughter Sylvia. Twelve years later she married Art Schooler, a master chef and they have three children, Candace, Roma, and David. They own and operate a Pancake House in Chilliwack, B.C. Fred married Evelynne Lazaruk of Rycroft in 1951. They have three children, Myrna, Tom and John and farm at Rycroft. Fred, who worked with the Department of Public Works at bridge building for many years now keeps departmental equipment in repair, and farms.

#### **HENRY BOX STOUGHTON**

Henry Box Stoughton was a New Zealander and a bachelor, whose claim to fame was that when the cream had risen in the 'rising' pan, it was so thick the mice could run across it without falling in.

Mr. Stoughton may have lacked a few culinary assets and failed some other housewifely chores, but he left an indelible memory in the community as a “fine Christian gentleman”.

He homesteaded N.E. 26-71-9-W6, proved it up, then sold it and bought the quarter that Charlie Edgerton had originally homesteaded. He built another house on that land and farmed there until the early thirties. Then he sold again and went to Vancouver Island where the weather was more to his liking.

No one seems to recall that he took much part in community events aside from regularly walking the five miles to Lower Beaverlodge school for church services every second week. On occasion he acted as Santa Claus at the annual Christmas concert at the school. One girl recalls that when he had been invited to their home one Christmas, he got down on the floor with her and her father to play with a wind-up toy train. Of such stuff are memories made!

#### **IDAN AND THILDA THORESON**

Idan and Thilda Thoreson arrived in the Huallen district in May of 1916 after a long, tedious trip by train from Thief River Falls, Minnesota. They were accompanied by their children, Steve, Ida, Gyda, John, Alpha, Ted, Thelma and baby Lucy. The train

was crowded with other families and there were times when it moved so slowly that the travellers walked along beside it picking up the odd tool or wheelbarrow left behind by the construction crew. One entire box-car carried all their worldly possessions: household furnishings, farm machinery — everything including horses and the family dog. They were greeted in Grande Prairie, the end of the rails by rain and a celebration. The Grande Prairie Sports were in progress and everyone for miles was in attendance, bringing even the family milk cow.

The Thoresons spent the first year in this area in a log cabin donated by a Charles Blackburn. Here they stayed until their own cabin was completed on SW 23-71-9-W6. This land was later sold to their son-in-law, William Romkey and they moved to the NE 22-71-9-W6. Their eldest son, Steve returned to the States to make his own life and the family eventually grew in size to ten children with the addition of Evelyn and Marjorie.

The children attended school at Lower Beaverlodge, often walking through deep drifts across country. The highlights of the social season were the school picnic and the Christmas concert party, complete with Santa Claus with an assist from Thilda who, accompanied by Mrs. Eiseman made the trek to Grande Prairie by horse and sleigh to procure gifts. The round trip was accomplished in one day, 40 miles in all.

Idan Thoreson was an original signer with the Alberta Pacific Grain Company and donated land for the building of the Huallen hall and a curling rink complete with horse stable. The curling rink was a great addition to the community and many a rink blistered their hands sweeping to win the Grand Challenge of the day, a box of Corn Flakes. The hall was constructed by volunteer labour with Guy Ireland as the paid chief carpenter and supervisor. John Mayer Senior also helped in this task. The advent of the telephone in 1930 brought Thilda to the fore, for along with her usual chores she also took on the job of “Central”. A barbed wire fence phone dated back to 1918.

When Idan arrived here he brought his horses with him. However, taking the advice of others he traded his horses for oxen. This was because oxen could work hard without needing an oat ration and were preferred for breaking land. The oxen were later traded for mules because of their legendary stamina. Eventually he went back to horses. Idan never did master a tractor. The story of his first experience still regales the family. It seems one son, who shall remain nameless carefully enthroned “Pa”, as everyone called him on the tractor seat, said, “Push this lever ahead”, and watched helplessly as Idan went through a ditch and fence, pulling back on the steering wheel, and yelling, “Whoa, Whoa!” in loud tones.

As the years went by the family married and started their own homes: Ida married Guy Ireland, Gyda — William (Billy) Romkey, John — Margaret Schneider, Alpha — Reg Baird, Ted — Mary Kachaluba, Thelma — George Bisset, Lucy — Melvin Hart, Evelyn — Gordon Mates, Marjorie — Myron Olsenberg.

Honesty and hospitality are the two adjectives



which best describe Idan and Thilda. Idan frequently played cards with John Mayer Senior who lived across the road. On one occasion, after settling up he still owed John 10 cents. Early next morning Idan was over to John's to pay and no doubt to begin a new session. Sundays at the Thoreson farm closely resembled a large picnic according to Mel Hart. Thilda's cooking and perhaps the seven attractive daughters drew hordes of young bachelors and one and all were invited in for a huge delicious dinner.

Idan and Thilda celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in 1958. Idan passed away on October 4, 1960 at the age of 90 and Thilda on October 29, 1964 at the age of 81. Their memory is an inspiration to us all.

#### JOHN AND MARGARET THORESON

In his youth John Thoreson spent little time at home. He set out to earn his stake at an early age. He worked in the mines in British Columbia and at Great Bear Lake in the North West Territories. After his back was injured in an accident he returned to this district, bought the Nordstrom quarter, which had 40 acres cleared, then the Wilkie quarter. He and Margaret, the former Margaret Schneider, cleared and developed both quarters. Although they were excellent farmers the farming situation began to pale and they and their fine sons sold the farm and purchased the Sexsmith Hotel in Sexsmith, Alberta. A disastrous fire in 1972 burned the hotel to the ground. However, the pioneer spirit is still in evidence, as the family is now in the process of rebuilding. Ill health has now forced John into retirement but Margaret is still extremely active in the business.

Their eldest son, Barry is married to Sharon Hommy whose grandfather come from the same district as Idan Thoreson, John's father. They live in Victoria. Richard, the second son, is still single and in business with Barry in Victoria. Brian, the third boy is married to Lexie Murchie and is managing the temporary hotel in Sexsmith. The youngest two sons, Dennis and Terry are still at home helping in the family business.

#### PEDOR THORESON

Pedor Thoreson filed on N.E. 21-71-9 in 1918. He and his wife lived in Grande Prairie and ran a dairy there. He never took up residence on his homestead nor became a part of the community. He worked his land just enough to prove it up. Someone remembers him as an older man who had a son, a school teacher, but it is not known where the young man taught.

Dave Cochrane farmed the land many years. Walter Heikel owns it now.

#### TED AND MARY THORESON

Although Ted Thoreson was just a lad of seven when he arrived in this area in 1916, he qualified as a pioneer in that he and his brother John helped their father clear and develop his land. He attended school at Lower Beaverlodge where he learned to speak English instead of the Norwegian the family spoke in Minnesota. When he was 16 he started working with the threshing crews and at the age of 17 went to work on Jeff Russell's hand-feed thresher for \$4.00 per day. He and Jeff were the entire crew and each farmer supplied two teams.

As a young man Ted did his stint of travelling — to the gold mines in Ontario and the ore mines of British Columbia. The mode of transportation was "riding the rails" and though the expenses were few the finances were fewer.

In the late 1930's Ted and his brother-in-law, Melvin Hart went into the hog business in a big way. They had approximately 200 hogs whose diet was supplemented by huge quantities of coal hauled from the local mine. This coal apparently added necessary minerals. The price of hogs at that time was about \$15.00 and they were netting \$10.00 per hog.

About this time Ted married Mary Kachaluba from the Mountain Trail area and they tried the grain and cattle business and later the motel business before settling into the dairying business on the NE 22-71-9-W6th, his father's home place. Ted and Mary built the dairy into a thriving operation from an original herd of 3 cows before retiring in 1966. At that time their son, Ron and daughter, Pat and her husband, Clem Jacobs took over. In 1968 Ron decided to make his own niche in life and became a commercial artist in Calgary. He married a Calgary girl, Donna Enders and they have one daughter, Crystal. Clem and Pat are still dairying and have further increased the herd. They have one son, Dean. It is apparent that Ron's boots are still in the Peace country as he now has hopes of becoming a farmer in his own right.

Although Ted is retired, he is still exceedingly active. Besides acting as advisor in his son-in-law's operation, he is not adverse to helping out in the field in busy times. Retirement means he now has time to fish, hunt, trap and travel to his heart's content.

Mary, ambitious by nature, has become a competent legal stenographer in Grande Prairie and still finds time to keep up her huge flower garden which has been admired by many. Ted and Mary have upheld the family tradition of honesty and hospitality. They have two other qualities for future generations to strive for — hardwork and humor.



The annual spring saw at Mountain Trail. Ted Thoreson, W. Irby, Chris Rutberg, Stan Boucher, G. Cameron, Cliff Aldred.

#### THE TRUAX FAMILY

The story of the western branch of the Truax family began in Ontario around 1900 where Grandfather Albert Truax had been a Methodist minister. Because of his liberal views he had been relieved of his church, so he had attached himself to one Charles Burns whose





The first post office at Lake Saskatoon where the mail came once a month. If the mail was late it arrived on the next stage a month later. Billy Lowe, Postmaster, and Garnet Truax.



Lower Beaverlodge children enjoying a favorite pastime. — 1954.



Garnet, Maud, Bernice and Al Truax, 1917.



Truax Family, 1934 (L-R) Glen, Bernice, Maud, Garnet, Margaret, Albert.



Albert and Margaret Truax, 1890.

beliefs he held to be more compatible with his own. His wife Margaret, not too sure she agreed with Mr. Burns, none the less dutifully followed her husband's lead. Margaret and Albert had nine children of which Albert Garnet was the eldest, born at Brantford, Ontario in 1888.

Garnet had grown up in the Methodist manses and had finished off his formal education in the Jarvis Street Collegiate Institute in Toronto where he had had some military training.

During his summer vacations he fled the city to Elias Smith's farm where he got a firm grounding in agriculture. In 1907-1908 he went to Edmonton and worked in a hardware store for a couple of years.

In 1909 his father bought a South African Scrip and Garnet returned to Ontario to join the Burnsites who were going west to farm cooperatively. (See Burns site story.) Garnet's intentions were to farm his father's scrip and to file on a homestead for himself. His mother, solicitous for his welfare, packed his blankets and his utensils. Garnet found among his effects a chamber pot for which he had little use. He and Don Cranston used it for a bean pot.

Garnet filed on N.E. 2-72-10 and his father's scrip is now part of the site of Beaverlodge. During his first years of homesteading, Garnet also freighted for I. E. Gaudin and clerked for him when not on the road. One summer when Mr. Gaudin was going to Ontario he told Garnet he could have any commission he could make on the binders he was selling — thinking he had already flooded the market. He was somewhat nonplussed to find Truax had sold five more. Garnet also helped Billy Johnson and Art Lacey build the Lower Beaverlodge school, as well as a house for himself. He and Billy Johnson batched there until Garnet and Maud Sherk were married.

Maud Sherk and her twin, Marley, were born at Sherkstown, Ontario in 1891. Their parents, Amos and Candace Sherk were of Mennonite stock dating back to



the United Empire Loyalist movement. Their families had settled in the Niagara Peninsula as early as 1792. Maud had always wanted to be a school teacher. When her mother became ill and had to go to Toronto for treatment Maud laid aside her dreams, took over the household chores and the care of her younger sister Lulu.

It was while his wife was recuperating in Toronto, that Amos and Maud's two brothers, Gordon and Marley, decided to go West with the Burnsides. A cousin came to help Maud prepare for their dispersal sale and pack necessities for their new life. Mother Candace came home and they set out in 1909 for Alberta.

On the farm at Lower Beaverlodge, Maud had worked inside and out — driving cattle to the river, hauling water from the river for household use, driving oxen on the binder and stooking grain. She laughs about how one fall their oats were frozen early, so were cut for green feed. The stand was rank and the juice from the green stalks flew back over her skirts as she drove. When dinner time came her skirts were starched as stiff as a board.

Maud was one of the belles of Beaverlodge. In those early days there were never enough girls to go around for the dances, concerts and basketball games that provided their entertainment. In 1914 she was married to Garnet Truax at the Sherk home by Reverend Hopkins. They moved to his homestead near Beaverlodge and four of their children were born there.

In 1919, Garnet moved his family to Red Willow where in their two-roomed house he set up a small store. It was this fateful winter that his mother and father and sixteen year old brother, Dawson, decided to come West and moved in with Garnet's. Maud was at her wits end to cope with three extras, a new pregnancy and four lively youngsters under the age of six in her two-roomed "store". The sorry outcome was that Maud lost her baby — had a long illness — and they all moved back to a house Garnet had been preparing for his folks in Beaverlodge.

At this time, Margaret, Garnet's mother, showed her mettle, by taking up the reins of Garnet's household. Her husband, Albert had come West in 1913 not as a settler seeking land, but as the head of the Burnsides. As their official representative he was welcomed in many homes and found the country and the hospitality were very appealing. In 1919, Mr. Partridge assumed Mr. Truax's responsibilities in the Association and Mr. Truax decided to join his eldest son in Beaverlodge. At this time Albert's health was failing and Margaret had long months of care for him before his death in 1922. Shortly after his death, Margaret and Dawson decided to go back to Ontario where Margaret died in 1931.

Maud and Garnet moved to Vancouver after his father's death. Here Garnet became a longshoreman and his family grew up on the water front. Being in the depression days it was a long drag on his meagre wages. Maud's contributions were the endless planning, preserving, and making-over to make do. Her one relaxation was using up left-over fabrics by hook-

ing them into beautiful rugs. Still, at the age of 83, she is able to wield her hook.

When Albert and Glen, their two sons, were old enough, they had their typical paper routes and Saturday jobs in the local meat market. Both boys took "shop" classes in carpentering and became efficient with tools. Glen attended the 6th Field Company Canadian Engineers in the local Drill Hall.

For two seasons Glen joined his Sherk relatives at Lower Beaverlodge taking work wherever he could get it. One winter he stayed with Cap Ed Reith. Another fall he started home through the Monkman Pass, joining up with the Pathfinder car on its way to Hansard. When it became evident the car wouldn't make it, he begged a bit of food and without gun or axe became the first hitch-hiker through to Hansard, B.C. via the Monkman Pass.

Glen was one of the first to enlist in 1939 being in England on January 1, 1940. He was in England for five years and married Gina Cheil in 1941. When he returned to Canada, he brought his wife and infant son, Dawson. He obtained work with the B.C. Hydro and has been with them ever since. They have another son, Martin. Glen and his wife live on Vancouver Island.

After high school, Bernice the eldest girl, took a secretarial course, then married Nibs Graham in 1934. They have four children, Joyce (Mrs. Dale Hopkins), Bruce, Carole and Ross all out earning their own livelihoods. The Grahams presently live in Christina Lake, B.C. Nibs died February, 1974.

Albert, Garnet's eldest son, came to the Lower Beaverlodge district in 1935 and worked for his uncles, the Sherk Bros., in the summer, and in Lyon's Meat Market in the winter. In 1936 he hired out to Victor Flint and in 1939 married Madelon Flint. He and Victor Flint formed a father and son partnership and Al has been on the farm ever since.

In 1942, Madelon and Al brought Gerald Victor to their home as a son and a year later added Albert Lyle. Two other children, Garnet Allen and Linda Beth were born to them in 1946 and 1951. All are married and are living in the vicinity of Beaverlodge.

The boys grew up with Welsh ponies to ride and besides adding to the fun of life on the farm, this contributed to the playing of cowboys and Indians. In turn, this interest in horses developed into miniature rodeos and County Fair participation and created a lucrative bank account for them. Linda, for her part, found more satisfaction in her piano.

In 1950 Al became the first 4-H leader of the local beef club, a position he held for four years. Madelon was active in church work, taught Sunday School for thirteen years, led C.G.I.T. and directed C.G.I.T. Presbytery camps for years, also was active in U.C.W., a member and Home and School Official. Al did his stint on the Official Church Board, in the local telephone company and as a member of the U.F.A. organization until ill health demanded giving up social participation. Madelon and Al are still on the farm — Al carpenters as well as farms. Madelon has added painting and home decorating to her list of interests.

Margaret, Garnet's youngest daughter, had a varied career in Vancouver before her marriage to Jack Whitby, a heavy duty machinery salesman. The

Whitbys have two children, Larry and Marilyn — both married. Jack is now manager for his company in Vancouver. Golf is their big hobby and Margaret also paints.

Maud Truax at 83 is at present resident in the Swanhaven Nursing Home in Grande Prairie.

### JOHN AND MARY WALTON

In 1910 the John Waltons came to the Lower Beaverlodge district and filed on a homestead and scrip east of Hugh Allen's land. John had owned a dairy in Ontario for 15 years and had given that up to manage a grocery store in Toronto. John's wife, Mary was a member of the Christian Association. Reports coming back to Toronto from the members who had gone into the Beaverlodge area the year before were re-assuring and enticing. The Waltons decided to try the new country. Albeit, when the time came to leave Toronto for the unknown, Mary sat down and cried.

They arrived in Edmonton in mid-February and at once began the purchase of oxen, sleighs and equipment for the long trail come March 1st. Making up the group with them were Thomas Kennedy, a man of 70, and his son Jim and Mrs. I. E. Gaudin and baby D'Arcy who shared the Waltons' caboose. The men usually slept in the stopping places leaving the caboose to the two women and five girls. Art and Jim Walton were included with the men.

The Waltons followed the rivers from Athabasca Landing to Mirror Landing, overland to Sawridge and across Lesser Slave Lake. When the thaw started they were at Grouard. They were able to borrow wagons and had then to take the long trail by Peace River Crossing and Dunvegan rather than the winter trail to Sturgeon Lake.

When they were settled on their land and began making plans for the future it was John who despaired and moaned "Oh Mary! We'll all starve here!" To which Mary definitely replied, "You should have thought about that back in Toronto! This is God's country, and I'm not going back over that trail!" Mrs. Walton never changed her mind about this being "God's Country".

Kathleen recalled how in those early days they had a lot of strangers at their table. Perhaps this was because John had the "mail haul" from Lake Saskatoon to Redlow — now Beaverlodge. The mail man usually had one or two travellers on board too. As a result Mr. Walton was able to help a good many of them find suitable land in the Beaverlodge valley.

When they first arrived, their only building was a dual purpose one — the stock in one end and the family in the other. Mrs. Walton was in constant fear that the flares they used for light would someday set the place afire, and the stock would be lost.

The Waltons raised huge flocks of turkeys. They kept them penned up at nights and in the day time one of the girls herded them to make sure the coyotes didn't have a pre-Christmas dinner. This served a double purpose. Many warm socks, mitts and sweaters were knit for the long cold winter while following the flock.

Henry Buckalow was one of the strangers that John Walton was able to direct to a suitable location and he

proved to be an invaluable friend, being kind enough to repay the Waltons' hospitality with sides of moose, berries or whatever he could share. Kathleen looked on him as a grandfather and kept in touch with him until his death, long after he had left the district. Other good neighbors to the Waltons were the Dolphins and the Reisbroughs. Mr. Dolphin was especially remembered for the big pails of berries he used to bring to Mrs. Walton. And "Mrs. Reisbrough was awfully good to us too", Kathleen recalled.

The Waltons didn't know much about farming when they came west. They brought a walking plow with them and laugh now that there was even a time when they didn't know how to put it into the ground or keep it there. Art spent half a day trying to make it stay in, then finally got a neighbor to show him how.

The Walton children, the youngest members of the neighborhood, were of school age, Jim, Jessie, Louise, Nellie and Kate. Irene and Art helped with the farm work. The children drove oxen to school in 1912 for the first six months, first held in Roy Shisler's homestead shack, later moved to Howard Henry's house until the school was built in 1913.

John Walton made several trips back and forth to Edmonton for winter supplies and to freight in supplies for others. On one such trip Sam Sargent went with him. Father Walton had all sorts of requests for things to be brought back — Kate asked for a jar of pickles. Mrs. Walton asked for a chamber pot. John wrapped them both carefully in his bed-roll so they wouldn't get broken. One night as he flipped his bed-roll open he remembered to care for the pickles but the chamber pot rolled across the bunk house floor. Sam eyed its progress and remarked, "There goes the bean soaker!"

Nellie, as a young woman contracted T.B. and the doctor advised that she be segregated from the rest of the family and have a fresh air sleeping room. A small cabin was built for her in which she took great pride and where she used her clever hands to create a little doll of a place for herself. When her health was restored she was much in demand by the young matrons of the district as an able helper with their children and much loved by the children themselves. When Nellie moved to Beaverlodge she was an active member of the Art and Crafts Club and worked in a dress shop for sometime. Then she took it over herself and later sold it to Mrs. A. G. Little. Her family then began to make demands on her time as she gave her mother and sister care. Father had died in 1933 and mother and Jessie had moved first to Wembley then to Beaverlodge. Mother died and Jessie lived with Nellie until her death.

Art enlisted in the first world war as a young man and came back to farm with his father until John's death in 1933. Then Art retained the farm with his mother and sister until the second World War. He rented the land to Ted Thoreson and Melvin Hart and enlisted again. On his return he brought a Scottish war bride, Agnes Gibson with him. They built a house in Beaverlodge and for years ran the concession at the Beaverlodge Community Centre. In the 1950's they built the "Walton Apartments" on the lot next to them. Agnes died in 1956 and Art still keeps himself





Ma Brainard with Art and Agnes Walton.

busy with the care and maintenance of his properties and keeping his yard neat and pretty. The land was sold to Ted Schoepp.

Alfred James — “Jim” was a resident of the district for 53 years. He married Eda Egerton of Longworth, B.C. and they farmed at Huallen on Jim’s homestead until 1941. Jim took over the agency for the B.A. Oil in Beaverlodge and moved his family — wife, daughter Florence and son Alfred into town. In 1961 ill health forced him to retire and he died suddenly at a family outing in 1963.

Louise married Ingvald Volden and they bought Art’s homestead land on the Mountain Trail where they lived for 14 years. They had two boys, Lloyd and Roy. The Voldens only move from the farm was to Grande Prairie where Ingvald has had employment with the Northern Canadian Plywood Co. Their boys are both married. Lloyd lives in Grande Prairie and Roy in Valleyview. The Voldens have seven grandchildren.

Irene Walton, the oldest daughter had a gay time in the early years as girls were scarce and young bachelors plentiful. She was known as one of the “Belles of Beaverlodge” at one time and enjoyed playing basketball on the Beaverlodge girls’ team. Irene married Bob Steele — they farmed on the land Norman Hauger now owns on the banks of the Beaverlodge River. They had one son Jackie. When Bob died in 1950 Irene and Jackie moved into town. Irene died in June 1958 and Jack just three months later, in November.

Jessie didn’t marry nor did Nellie.



John Walton family off to school, 1913.



A Shaganappi cutter, a homemade box built over the front bob of a sleigh. Miss Irene Walton (Steele) and Miss Effie Flint (Green).

Kathleen married Cecil Penny and they farmed in the Aspendale district until Cecil went into the services in the second World War. Kate moved into Wembley at this time with their three children Joan,

Mary and Lawrence. The Pennys were the post-masters at Wembley for many years until their retirement around 1970. Joan died as a young woman. Mary and Lawrence are both married. Kate and Cecil have five grandchildren and a lovely retirement home in Wembley.

#### FRANK WILLSEY FAMILY

Although the Willseys reside in the Aspen Dale community their story is entrenched in the early days of Lower Beaverlodge. Frank Willsey was born near Madison, Wisconsin in 1881 of Danish parents. In 1907 he moved to Craik, Saskatchewan, then on to Brock, Saskatchewan where he married Margaret More, of Scottish descent, in 1913. Thirteen children were born of this union. In 1917 they moved to Wembley with their little boys Daniel and Melvin. They spent a few years in the Lake Saskatoon and Beaverlodge areas where Frank worked as a farm hand for "Rutabaga" Johnson and others.

In 1921 they made their last move, to Aspen Dale. Here they built a house of huge fire-killed spruce. Six and a half rounds made an eight foot wall. Many of the logs were so huge that two children couldn't reach hands around them. Their barn was only four rounds high.

Frank was a meticulous carpenter and many fine homes in the district attest to his art. He also had his steam engineer papers and tended the 75 H.P. Case steamer used by the Bull Outfit for threshing for ten years. Frank also had a half share in a Case bull tractor, tricycle model, with H. Beeman of Wembley.

The Willsey children had five and one half miles to go to the Lower Beaverlodge school. To make winter schooling possible their father built them a closed-in van and installed a wood heater. It wasn't until 1928 when the Willseys and their neighbours "pushed" hard and long that the Aspen Dale school was built, three miles from their home.

The Willseys had only one quarter of land but the farming didn't suffer. The three eldest boys, Dan, Melvin and Raymond were keen to farm and soon found excuses to retire early from the educational system to pursue their preference, renting any land that became available in the district.

It was about this time that Raymond developed T.B. of the bone in his knees and had to spend a winter on his back following an operation. Then he spent another six months on crutches. The doctor advised him to spend as much time as possible in the open air. A "would-be" faith healer had much the same idea and he and Raymond spent a memorable summer on the hill above the spring on Vic Flint's farm.

Mrs. Willsey was a paragon of efficiency. With a baby in the cradle for years on end she still managed to have a well fed, healthy and clean clan. Besides this she had time for her Women's Institute work with the Lower Beaverlodge women and later belonged to their U.F.W.A. One summer the W.I. sent the excited Mrs. Willsey to the Provincial Convention as their delegate whilst the other members shared the joys of looking after her children. Cheerful always, motherly, ample and generous her homely philosophy sent many good citizens into the world. When church services came to

their district, the Willseys were there. They were also at the card parties, the dances and the film showings held in the new school house.

The Willseys were indefatigable in furthering social and community interests and in helping early settlers.

When World War II broke out three of the boys donned uniforms. Dan became a driver for an officer, Melvin saw active service mainly in Holland where he was stationed when Armistice was proclaimed and where he got his sergeant stripes. Jack never got out of Canada.

All the children are alive and well. Dan, who married Anne Childs and has four children, lives in Grande Prairie and works for Canfor. Melvin married Rosie Hotte, has four children and farms in the Aspen Dale area. Raymond, unmarried, farms the home place and carpenters equally as well as his father. Marjorie lost her first husband, Orvil Bue in a combine accident at Hythe. They had four girls. Marjorie has since married Loren Milliken and lives at Kamloops with their three children. Frances married Roy Rose, lives at Enilda, has no children and has become an ardent curler competing in the Provincial draws in 1974. Jack married twice and has four children. Jean married Frank Spence of Hinton Trail but since their four children have grown, they have moved to Fox Creek where Frank services oil wells. Viola, her husband Alfred Miller and their two girls live in Grande Prairie where Alfred works for Canfor. Lloyd and Dorothy farm at Enilda. Louise and husband Marvin Vatne have a family of four and farm at Valhalla. Ivy and Jim Wilson farm at Shell Lake, Saskatchewan and have five children. Earl and wife Lorna are at Langley, B.C. where he operates a Cat, servicing new housing developments. Ellen married Walter Thompson. They have three boys; Walter works for B.C. Hydro at Lilloet.

#### ROLAND YOUNG

Roland Young grew up in England and attended St. Clement Danes School for Boys. Not caring for city life his parents paid his "tuition" on an English farm where he learned to love the open country.

At seventeen he enlisted in World War I, won the Military Medal for bravery, was wounded, and spent several months in a Military hospital. After the war Roland set out for Canada and the Peace River country. He homesteaded in the southern Lower Beaverlodge area, later known as Aspen Ridge, and now called Aspen Dale. There he entered into all the community events with enthusiasm. His neighbours credit him with being the best "pusher" in the district.

As early as 1920 he was so determined to form a telephone company that he declared that he and Bob Garrett would put up their own line. In 1933 they finally got one at a cost of \$11.00 per member. He was instrumental in getting the rural mail delivery into the district, and although a bachelor, he also "pushed" for the establishment of a school district. To quote a neighbor, "When there weren't enough children to warrant a school being built in the district, Roland manufactured extras", and by fall they had enough to warrant hiring a teacher. The first teacher was a Miss Broadbridge, followed by Miss Winonah Howell. By



this time Roland was taking his duties as one of the first school trustees so seriously that he married Miss Howell to keep a teacher in the district. Frank Willsey and Fred Paverly were two other trustees who helped Roland run the school properly.

These men saw to it that the school was really used; besides school in the day time, it became the social centre. Church services were held by the Anglican minister from Wembley, and he also brought National Film Board shows to the residents. Dances, card parties, telephone and U.F.A. meetings were held in the school. His life style also included active participation in the Masonic Order.

One neighbor said Roland's story wouldn't be complete without recalling how, every winter when ice was being put up on Bauman Lake, Roland would manage somehow to fall into the icy waters at least once.

Due to a war disability, undetected at demobilization, Roland had to give up the strenuous labor of the farm. He and Winonah sold their land to Melvin Willsey and moved to Grande Prairie where he found easier work with the V.L.A.

In 1961 he was invited home to London to a family reunion. While spending a weekend with an Army pal at Leicester, he died of a heart attack. His brother, Rev. Howard Young, who was home from the missionary field of South Africa, conducted the funeral service.

Winonah still resides in Grande Prairie and remains an active member of the Eastern Star. They had no children.

#### MEMORIES OF THE HUALLEN DISTRICT

Ted Thoreson driving over to Bob Krantz's store at Lake Saskatoon to listen to the first radio. There were numerous earphones and everyone would take turns listening to the United States stations and static and marvelling at the whole idea. Three or four people listening and hearing the odd recognizable word commenting in awe, "Did you hear that!"

John Mayer acted as the local blacksmith and sharpened plough shares at 25 cents each. The hand work was done with the help of his sons.

Bill Russell was a very community-minded man who would gladly drop his chores to help a neighbor in

need. He had the first portable wood sawing outfit in the country and would saw wood for \$2.00 per hour which barely paid the price of the fuel used. When his father passed away, Bill could not afford burial expenses and prepared the body for burial himself.

All the neighbours turning out to log and saw lumber for the new curling rink at "Slim Russell's" farm.

Dave Cochrane and Bill Russell were double-dating in Bill Russell's Essex. The car was so narrow Dave's girl had to sit on his knee. Bill's date of course sat in the middle with the gear shift. The girl was very proper and Bill nearly boiled his car over before he finally managed to shift into high gear. He would rather boil his car than chance embarrassing someone.

The Prince Albert Hotel in Beaverlodge and run by "Jake" Smith. He acted as registration clerk, cook and maid and ran a very hospitable service.

#### A TRIBUTE TO OUR PIONEERS — by Pat Thoreson Jacobs

I am a third-generation resident of this Peace River country, and only now do I realize the full magnitude of what my ancestors, and all the others like them have accomplished. My paternal grandparents came to this country in 1916. It was raw forest then. They were fortunate in that they were able to bring all their necessary possessions and some cash with them. But life must have been dreadfully hard, physically, mentally and emotionally! My maternal grandparents didn't arrive until 1929 — the beginning of the Depression. If anything, their lot was even more difficult, for they arrived with nothing more than they could carry in their hands and not a word of English. The best land had been claimed and they had no money to buy what they needed. They were forced to work for the earlier pioneers for what goods they could spare because they also had little cash.

I have only to take a drive over the paved roads of this country, past the well-developed farms and towns to appreciate the gift I have taken for granted. I shall never complain about my trials — they are too puny to mention.

Pioneers, I salute you and am forever in your debt.

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In homestead days neighborhood gossip was rampant and each story gained weight as it was passed along and when it was repeated time and again it took on the semblance of authenticity. Consider the family which was more than fond of one of their horses, Queen Charlotte. Her equestrian pedigree was yards long and her ancestors' ribbons draped many a tack room. Queen Charlotte could run a mile in 4.18 or was it 3.59? Some day they would race her and establish her record. They would try her out at the Halcourt Sports . . . then on to Beaverlodge and Edmonton and greater fame.

They were still planning to show their future Queen's Plate Champion when the mare and a plough horse, hitched as a team to a lumber wagon, ran away. Never mind that it was their only wagon being dragged to destruction. They clocked her at 4.25! What could she do, hampered by her nondescript team mate? Was a ploughed field a proper medium to test the time capabilities of a highly bred racer?

Neighborhood wags suggested that the plough horse did remarkably well to pace the Thoroughbred and might respond to training.



# MOUNTAIN TRAIL

## THE MOUNTAIN TRAIL SETTLEMENT

That section of the original Edmonton-Dawson Creek highway which skirts Saskatoon Mountain was known in the early years as the "Mountain Trail" and is still referred to by oldtimers by that name. The old highway was a rather narrow gravelled road and was maintained by local residents, using small graders pulled by four horses. This particular part of the highway was built straight up over Beaverlodge Hill, so named because the old townsite of Beaverlodge was located on the crest of the hill. Some four miles east of the old town of Beaverlodge the Mountain Trail schoolhouse still stands.

The average passerby today probably sees only an old dilapidated log building which scarcely merits a second glance. However, to the older residents this building arouses many memories. Not only did their children receive an education there but the schoolhouse and grounds were the centre of much of the social life enjoyed by the community for miles around. Church services were held on Sundays whenever possible.

Reverend Sandercock came to the school on Sundays and held church services. One Sunday he stood on the bridge and called to people to come to church as they were walking up to the Mountain to a ball game. They didn't stop, so he went too. Mrs. English had a melodion that she took to school to play for the services. Rev. Sandercock brought movies out and showed them with a projector that was battery

operated and turned by hand. He also brought lantern slides.

Picnics and wiener roasts were held there. Dances were held frequently. These country dances were a gathering place for young and old alike. Those not caring to dance sat around and visited while enjoying the lively music. Walter Irby played the violin, piano and drums. Bill Russell obliged on either the organ or piano. Bill Smith, Chris Rutberg and John Dommer had violins. Ted Thoreson played the banjo and violin and on occasion "the spoons and the cake pan". Other local musicians were Gunnar Torgerson, Lockie McClellan, John Smith and Ray Cahoon. Walter Irby called when a square dance was in progress. When the musicians' feet got to thumping enthusiastically, the stage on which they sat was actually seen to shake!

Walter Irby was the acknowledged auctioneer at the box socials where the school marm's lunch box always brought the best price in the community of bachelors. Out behind someone could always be found to dole out the local version of "Mountain Dew".

At one time an entertainment committee was appointed. They started a semi-monthly newspaper called "The Mountain Trail Eyeopener". This paper was written by hand and was read by one of the committee during a lull in the festivities on a dance night. Who the reporters were is not clear at the moment, but they must have equalled or surpassed the F.B.I. in turning up information, as many amusing and sometimes embarrassing incidents concerning local residents appeared in the paper to the great glee of the rest of the audience. The Literary Society under the able leadership of Della Nordstrom staged its plays. If stage props were needed Walter Irby's furniture was always available.



Between times there were baseball games and card parties. The school children presented their annual Christmas concert and the school picnics were eagerly anticipated.

The school board, during the trying years of the hungry 30's consisted of Bill Russell, Jim Cahoon and Ed Reith. These trustees had the difficult and thankless task of administering the school's meagre finances.

An amusing incident occurred at one of the ratepayers meetings at that time. There was some discussion as to the advisability of purchasing a set of bob sleighs to be used for hauling wood for the school. Some of the ratepayers considered this to be an unnecessary expenditure. Another person reminded the meeting that only five dollars was involved in the purchase. Jim Cahoon, one of the dissenters, rose to his feet and drawled, "Five dollars would look like a great big wagon wheel to me about now!" This remark goes far towards illustrating the financial problems encountered by school boards, as well as by individuals, in the hungry 30's.

Walter Bowen was one of the later school board members. He would travel around the country on his horse, collecting school taxes so the teacher could be paid. He sent the money with Joe Grendys one day and that happened to be the day the teacher asked the children to use certain words to make sentences. Joe's word was 'contains'. His sentence, "The teacher's



The forestry look out tower in the Mount Saskatoon park—1942

The deserted homestead shack of Fred Grier on top of Saskatoon Mountain, 1926







May gathering, Jimmy Russell, Bill Russell, Mrs. Fawkes, Florence Russell, Mrs. Andy Moe, Marguerite Johnson, Cecil Fawkes, Ann Proden, Margaret Fawkes and Ivan Fawkes.



Mountain Trail School children—1944. Back: Jennie Kachaluba, John Cowan, Mervin Simons. Middle row: Eugene Lobas, George Hegland, Ina Simons, Marjorie Cahoon, Annie Lobas, Elsie Smith. Front row: Wesley Smith, Muriel Wilson, Betty Borg.

pocket contains money.” Walter had the only radio close enough for school children to go to, to hear the broadcast of the crowning of King George the VI.

Water was carried to the school from Walter Irby’s well, across the road and some days we had an extra share of vitamins with it, as rabbits were quite plentiful then!

Jimmy Blanco had only one skate, so he would use it in the winter time to skate to school on the track of the road.

Elma Elkins is believed to have been the first teacher in the school. She taught there for quite a number of years and was succeeded by Jessie Erskine in 1932.

Mrs. Florence Russell also taught for three years — 1941, 42 & 43. The school was closed in 1944 and the children bussed to Beaverlodge. John Smith had a 1927 Chev that he used for a school bus.

But time and progress wait for no man. The schools were centralized. T.V. changed the pattern of entertainment and the well knit community began to unravel. The same people, the yarn of which our community was knit, are still human and kindly and responsible people, but fashion has decreed a looser knit.

#### RITA AND CHET BOOTH — by Rita Booth

In 1920 we left Alameda, California, with the Wesley McCormicks to try our luck homesteading in

Canada. Chet was born and raised on a cattle ranch in California where he and his folks were in the butcher business. So after finishing service in the army, McCormick talked us into taking up a homestead. We stayed in Edmonton, then took the Dunvegan train to Grande Prairie. The trip was supposed to take overnight but ended up taking four days. We were off the track many times and saw cars of wheat dumped over and the tracks replaced. At one time we had a wait of eight hours and found out the engineer and firemen were in a poker game. Finally a landslide and we had to carry our trunks around it to another train. At the Smoky we took on water and the tank burst, flooding the car. When we arrived in Grande Prairie we took up our residence at the Immigration House, a big kitchen for all to use and bedrooms. When the snow left a bit we hired a horse and buggy and went out to find a place which was near Beaverlodge. Wilms, Jefferies, John Johns, Walter Irby and the Hazards were our nearest neighbours. We rented the Hazard’s cabin until we were able to build on our place.

We built a cabin, Rita doing the chinking, and went to Beaverlodge for supplies. One day when we were eating we heard a noise and found that the ridge pole had broken. Chet worked hard trying to replace it and I tried to help but was not strong enough to hold it when he got it above his head. So the roof caved in with all our possessions inside amidst a fire built on the dirt. I tried to throw the chinking mud where I thought the fire was. We started for Rawleighs about midnight, and found our way by the light of an electric storm. We stayed there as he was working in Grande Prairie.

Memories: The bears ate from our dog dish and Chet killed four of them and when hanging them up got a kink in his shoulder and neck and couldn’t raise his head, so I helped. The smell was so strange to me it almost made me ill. But I held the lantern and pulled back the hide so he could work on it. By the fourth bear, I could open my eyes and really help a bit. I often think of taking an axe and going outside to chop off pieces of the meat. They’d fly off in the snow then I’d pick them up and go in and cook them. The strawberries, blueberries and saskatoon berries were so thick that we canned some for winter. You almost walked on strawberries and the Jeffery children used to pick and sell them.

Our neighbors asked for the fat off the bears, which puzzled me until I learned that they rendered it down and mixed the oil with the buds of black poplar (Balm of Gilead) to form a balm or salve for medical purposes. Perhaps this was an Indian usage adopted by the settlers and perhaps these ingredients form the basis of many proprietary products which today we use freely.

Chet snared snowshoe rabbits and cut and hauled wood to Lake Saskatoon in the winter to exchange for macaroni and beans and other staples so we always had enough. Many times he left things for the Jefferies family, as they had so many children. He even milked range cows to take milk to them.

Mrs. Jefferies had a little one and one day was out grubbing willows with the baby under the wagon. She and the little ones were clearing the forty acres required to prove up the homestead.



We worked for neighbours and at haying camps. As Christmas came near, we tried to collect our wages. After several attempts Chet came home with a plow, chickens and harness, so ordering from a catalogue never came about as a catalogue company doesn't take its pay that way.

At Christmas, I made small sacks from dyed flour sacks, green and red, and filled them with candy and peanuts for the children at Jefferies. They had never seen ornaments so they and the older people enjoyed seeing our tree.

In winter the Jefferies would come up and just sit and hold my dolls. So when we left we gave them all but my foreign collection. It was a Christmas we will never forget. Christmas Eve we went to Wilms on horseback. Coming out much later we looked on a beautiful scene of new fallen snow, clear skies and a big star shining just above our cabin, and could hear the wolves howling in the spruce grove. It was a fairyland.

Another time when coming home from Beaverlodge I couldn't feel my feet and told Chet about it. He had me get off and walk several times and each time drove the horses a little faster. I decided to say I could feel them as I thought I would drop if I walked any farther. We wore the high Indian moccasins, such as the pair we bought while visiting Beaverlodge last year. They do smell strong!

Chet went to borrow a bull and tied him to the back of the sled. The bull decided to go backwards when the horses went forward. So Chet had me drive and he twisted the bull's tail. The bull decided he would like to get at me and would lunge. I was so frightened but Chet said, "He can't get at you, just turn your horses." Me! A city girl, but I tried to do as told, and we did get home.

Chet cut 10 acres of hay with a scythe as our mowing machine broke down and we couldn't get parts. When hauling the hay I went with him. The roads were just trails so we had to stop to let the horses breathe before going over a place where a tree had fallen. When Chet started them again I was in the middle of the hay on top. The wheel hit the roots and over went the hay, wagon and me rolling into tall willows. Imagine a person hanging up in a willow bush! We laugh about it often. Guess I was just the city girl that made all things funny. But if I hadn't had a husband that was a worker I know it would have been different. For although we seemingly had nothing, we had so much. And the experience to me has been wonderful and always happy.

I sang at Hazel Wilms' wedding to Reg Smith and played the piano too. I also sang at the Queen's birthday. Mrs. St. Pierre Ferguson of Lake Saskatoon tanned our bear hides and also made a beautiful cape, hat and muff of ermine for Hazel Wilms' going-away outfit. While visiting Mrs. Ferguson she was tanning or had tanned a bear hide for some gentleman and she stood on a chair and put the bear's nose to the ceiling. It was still long enough to be on the floor. She said it was killed on the Wapiti.

The thought of mosquitoes still makes me cringe, they were so bad. When horseback riding a person didn't know if they were riding a bush or a horse as we

put branches under the edge of the saddle and around the bridle. They would go in the house and we would start a little fire in a can and then put green leaves on it so it would smoke and drive out the mosquitoes. Guess we all smelled like smoke but it was better than their bites.

On learning we were to have a little one and as we were so far from a doctor and people, my mother was anxious. Chet decided it would be best for me to go home. Money was scarce and people were paying more freight to get their cattle to Edmonton than they received for them. I went to Grande Prairie by wagon and took the train there. It ran off the track once. When Chet returned it left the track twice.

Chet stayed on until he got enough to come home too and as the Queen's birthday, May 24, was coming up he decided he would try to make some money riding wild horses at Beaverlodge's 1921 sports day. He had been promised he would not be asked to ride one called "Suicide" but he did draw him. Because he was offered more money he decided to ride him, which he did but we were not citizens then and he got talked out of the money. So he kept on grubbing trees and clearing land for others until able to return to California.

I guess if our baby had not entered into the situation we would be Canadians now. I still feel, we lived a lot and had many wonderful experiences.

I forgot to mention that the roads were so boggy and in so many places were corduroyed with poles, and the sidewalks in Grande Prairie were planks built over the mud.

In 1973 it was such a surprise to see the country we had lived in 52 years ago, in company with our daughter and son-in-law. We talked to several people in the new Beaverlodge and saw the trains and even a radar station. Our homestead was at the base of Saskatoon Mountain.

We went in with little and came back with a little less in personal belongings, but a wealth of experiences and lovely memories and our children love to hear of it.

#### WALTER BOWEN

A Saturday visitor to Beaverlodge used to be Walter Bowen, who lived at the base of Saskatoon Mountain and drove a two-wheeled cart pulled by a team of white and bay horses.

Walter had a specialty, almost a passion, for growing Homesteader garden peas and endeavouring to sell the seed far and wide. On his death, the neighbors found many sacks of the seed stashed in various buildings on the farm. Allan Watson recalls that one fall he helped Walter stack the peas. It was a 3-day task, hence there must have been a considerable acreage of them.

Walter was a very careful bachelor and kept a clean house. Its one room measured 8 x 10 feet and contained a fair-sized cookstove, a large radio, a large heater and a bunk bed. Breakfast was no problem because the fire could be laid and the table set by reaching from the bed.

Walter had a sister in England and had land on Vancouver Island before coming to the Mountain Trail district. He died at the time the road past his place was being paved to serve the Air Base.



## HARRY BURNS

Harry Burns homesteaded N.W. 34-71-9, now owned by the Beaverlodge Research Station, in May of 1917. So far as old-timers are able to recall, he lived with Walter Irby for a few months while he made some small attempts at working his land. Discouraged at the monumental task he disappeared — his whereabouts are completely unknown.

## LAYTON BRUMEN

Layton Brumen, better known as "Slim the Gambler", came to the Mountain Trail district in November, 1917, and filed on N.W. 27-71-9, just north of Gordon Cameron's homestead. He knew nothing of farming, had no equipment and the closest he came to having a house was a few rounds of logs Gordon Cameron put up for him as he attempted to prove up. He never lived on his land but in those days it was permissible to prove up your land by working on other men's farms, so Slim "hired out," while Gordon Cameron did his breaking for him. He is known to have worked for Cal Campbell and Joe Moore around Bear Lake. However, as his nickname implies — he spent his spare time gambling in the homes of his bachelor friends and the back rooms of the pool room and blacksmith shop.

Gordon Cameron, seeing that "Slim" would never farm his own land, asked Slim to give him first chance at buying it from him. Imagine Cameron's chagrin when a Dr. Reilly from Grande Prairie arrived one afternoon to hire Gordon to do more breaking on Brumen's quarter which he, the doctor, now owned. The story goes that when Slim was paid for the land he got into an all night gambling game, and by morning both the money and Slim were gone.

## GORDON CAMERON

Gordon Cameron was 17 when he came to the Mountain Trail area in 1913 with his brother-in-law, Frank Boyd. Originally from Quebec, but of Scottish origin, he had gone to New Westminster, B.C. with the Boyds, to look over the lumbering situation. There Gordon worked in the bush and mills for a couple of years, until Frank suggested going to the Peace River country. In ten days they were on their way and for young Gordon this was high adventure! Frank already had some relatives at Lake Saskatoon who would welcome them.

Gordon filed on S.W. 27-71-9 three miles east of the Beaverlodge cemetery and Frank on S.E. 20-71-9 just across the road from the Edgerton homesite. Gordon remembers grass so rank that it played one out to push through it. He put up four stacks of hay, cutting it with a scythe. The Indians told him, "This year, this high!", indicating their shoulders; "Next year, this high!", indicating their knees; "Next year, this high!", indicating their feet; "Next year, all gone!" Gordon says they were right.

Gordon Cameron worked out a good deal for other farmers in the summer months and did bush work in the winter. He got about \$35.00 per month in the pre-war years but in the '30's men were lucky to get their board and tobacco. In 1917 he signed up for overseas duty.

Although Gordon's mien is one of quiet reserve, in



Members of the 21st Canadian Reserves. Bramshot, 1918, including Ernie Harding, Art Walton, Gordon Cameron, Albert Miller, Bert Veldhuis and Earl Cage.



Skating party at Gordon Camerons 1929.



Gordon Cameron's ice plow used about 1920 to cut blocks of ice for summer use.



Ted Thoreson, Chris Rutberg, Cliff Aldrich, Walter Irby, Bill Russell, and Gordon Cameron sawing up Bill Russell's wood pile.



him there also lurked the soul of a fun-loving prankster. In the army one of the C.O.'s was keeping a pig by feeding it table refuse. Gordon and his pals thought he ought to be deprived of this pig but had to devise some way of getting it away without its squeals betraying them. They sought the help of a medical officer who gave them enough chloroform to sedate the pig. This done they placed it in a blanket, carried the pig off to market and sold it. The C.O. is still wondering what happened to his pig!

In 1919 Gordon was back on his farm with a Soldier Grant that allowed him to increase his acres. Among other things he worked for Happy Fletcher, threshing farmers' stacked bundles, hauled water for the steamer that ran the mill grinding out "Bull Beaters Best" flour and spent many winters in logging camps. In the winter of 1920 he and Charlie Boyd brought an ice-plow from Winnipeg. This was a single-bladed implement that was pulled by a horse. It cut ten inches into the ice and at the same time made a cutting line for the next row of blocks. Once the first row of blocks were lifted, it was easy to crack the next row off without further sawing. He and Charlie did custom ice cutting with this plow; in 1921 they filled all the ice houses for the village of Lake Saskatoon for five cents a block.

Being a bachelor, Gordon's place was also a social rendezvous for good natured fun. One day, after a very sociable afternoon the gathering decided they should have a turkey dinner, so one of Gordon's turkeys was sacrificed. The head was chopped off, the feathers stripped and the bird hurriedly readied for the oven. Several long sociable hours later dinner was served. Not until Ted Thoreson had the neck of the bird to his mouth was it discovered that the crop — still full of oats — had been left in the bird.

Gordon had a reputation of never missing a dance and had a particular liking for square dances. But his chief pleasure was to see what pranks he could play. One older neighbor said he went just to see what Gordon would do next. Music for the dances, usually held in private homes and the schools prior to the building of the Hualien hall, was provided by Inez Stone and Vic Flint on their mouth-organs, Walter Irby and Gunner Torgeson on their violins and Bill Russill and Mrs. Art Nordstrom on the organ.

Around 1930 the Hualien community curling rink was built and Gordon became an ardent curler, following the bonspiels to each town in turn. While curling at Hualien one winter a Mountain Trail school teacher "set her cap" for Gordon and to further her ends she too took up curling. She had a problem though — she always put her rocks through the house. When she played lead for Gordon, with sober face and twinkling eye, Gordon would set his broom and call to her, "Back-house weight E !"

Although Gordon was a fun-loving prankster there are many who recall the kindly neighbor he was to all. He could always be counted on to "go the second mile" when asked to help his neighbors — be it with his breaking plow or threshing machine or wood cutting gang.

Gordon sold his original homestead and bought the Art Nordstrom land where he lived still a bachelor

with many memories and many friends, until his death in February 1974.

## FRANK DEAN

The Dean family claim that their name is Belgian but that they spoke German and migrated from Germany to Austria. Frank married Celia Wollfe of Austria and ultimately the family started for the Peace by way of Athabasca with a caboose and two freight sleighs. They settled north of the present Wembley and some took homesteads on the Mountain Trail. Times were very hard at first and some of the grain was flailed, by hand or by machine and cleaned in a homemade fanning mill. They reached Lake Saskatoon in 1911, ran a meat market there in 1915 and 1916, smoking their own hams and making sausage. In 1920 Frank and Celia returned to Germany.

Three sons: John, Dan and Jacob homesteaded near Lake Saskatoon. Barbara returned to Germany and married an architect. One of her sons returned to Grande Prairie and as a butter maker won First Prize at the Toronto Royal for two years for his product. Sophie, another sister trained as a nurse, is married and is living in Regina.

Annie worked for Mrs. E. A. Smith for three years before marrying Jim Bauman. She is now retired, living in Grande Prairie, but retirement for her means keeping a house full of roomers, caring for a big garden, picking berries and helping the neighbors. She is a happy, active, healthy 74-year retired person.

## JOHN DOMMER — by Marion Dommer

John Peter Dommer was born in Albany, New York in 1867 and his early years were spent in Michigan. He enjoyed working with wood and took the trade of carpenter and cabinet maker. His skill for repairing wooden separators and farm equipment took him to nearly every state of the Union. In 1907, with a bridge construction crew for the Canadian Pacific Railway, he came to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. There in 1910 he took a homestead and raised a family.

In 1928 the urge to homestead called again. This time John took a quarter section on the south west slope of Saskatoon Mountain. In 1930 he was followed by his son Alvin, a youth of 17 years. Together, they built many buildings throughout the district. A number of these still stand as a tribute to their builder.

John Dommer played the violin. His music was often danced to in the Mountain Trail school house.

As another venture, John made a shingle mill to manufacture poplar shingles.

In 1940 he returned to Saskatchewan where he died in 1942. His homestead was sold to Ray Stewart.

Alvin remained, working for the Reverend Hopkins at Lake Saskatoon. He married Marion Harland in 1950 and in 1957 moved to the Scenic Heights area where they still reside.

## HENRY ELKINS

Henry Elkins came to Wembley from North Dakota in the fall of 1928. He was met there by his father, Hans, and mother, Helen who had motored up earlier from Vulcan, Alberta. They were of Norwegian descent, of pioneer spirit and had come with intentions of filing on a homestead. One brother remained in Vulcan





Henry Elkin's home. Mrs. Nordstrom taking a group to the W.I. meetings with their mule team.

but passed away shortly afterwards. Henry and his father hired out to work on the new railroad under construction from Wembley to Hythe. Later that fall, Henry's wife, Marguerite and one-year old daughter, Lois, joined him.

That first winter they lived in Wembley. A second daughter was born there, christened Carol Marie.

In the fall of 1929 they moved to Hualien and rented a farm then known as the "Porter Place" but owned by a Mr. Peacock who was living in Chicago. Here was a good house, a barn and chicken coop, also about 30 acres of cleared land. The closest neighbours were the Jim Baumans, Art Nordstroms, Chris Rutbergs, Gordon Cameron and Bill Russell. All became good friends and were very helpful to each other.

The family lived here for about five years with grandma and grandpa living there also. Elma, Henry's sister joined them and taught the Mountain Trail school.

By clearing and grubbing land for others the men acquired some livestock and grandma raised large flocks of poultry.

During this time Henry and Marguerite were blessed with two more daughters — Joyce and Marian.

Sorrow came with the death of Carol Marie. Many friends offered assistance, sympathy and brought floral arrangements made from their own flowers. She was buried in the Beaverlodge cemetery.

In the fall of 1934 Henry and family moved up on the Mountain Trail as Gordon Fawkes and sons, Cecil and Ivan, had taken over the Porter Place. The only advantage in this move was getting closer to the school. The house was a large one-room log building and not very warm.

Hunting trips were a matter of necessity and every fall Henry went moose hunting across the Wapiti river, usually coming home with a good supply of meat.

Three more children, Donna Mae, Edwin Robert and Carey Helene were born while they were living on the Mountain Trail.

In the spring of 1941, Henry was offered a construction job on elevators back in North Dakota so he left Canada in May. His wife and family remained until August, then sadly bade farewell and departed to live in New Rockford, North Dakota, U.S.A.

Another child was born in 1944, a boy, christened Richard Gary. All seven children graduated from high school, are now married and have families:

Lois — Mrs. L. R. Whelton, 3 children — Pocatello, Idaho

Joyce — Mrs. Wm. Lobsinger, 6 children — Des Moines, Iowa

Marion — Mrs. M. Poulas, 3 children — Boulder, Colorado

Donna — Mrs. R. Keener, 1 child — Jeromesville, Ohio

Bobby — two children — Mountain, North Dakota

Carey — Mrs. R. Deibert, 4 children, Turin, Italy

Richard — 1 child, New Rockford, North Dakota

Henry and wife are retired and reside in New Rochford, North Dakota.

## GORDON FAWKES

A son of William Fawkes, born January 4, 1886 at Winnipeg, Manitoba, Gordon Fawkes grew up on his father's farm at Oak Lake, Manitoba. He attended the local schools and married Ethel Louise Giradot, from Virden, Manitoba in 1909. They lived and farmed at Oak Lake and raised their family of two sons, Ivan and Cecil.

They all moved to Beaverlodge in March, 1929 where Gordon joined the staff at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm for two years. Then he had work with the Provincial government and later with the County of Grande Prairie for a period of some 30 years. Gordon also worked a short time with the Alberta Department of Highways before retiring.

He was predeceased by his wife Ethel in 1942 and by his oldest son, Ivan in 1955. Cecil lives at Nanaimo, B.C.

Gordon married Alice Kirpatrick in 1949 and lived in Grande Prairie until his death on January 1, 1963.

Gordon was a diligent Field Crops supervisor for the County for many years and was highly instrumental in controlling weed infestations. He is also remembered as an ardent supporter of the Monkman Pass Highway Association and his collection of slides used to tell the story of the project.



Jim Ellicome, Cecil Fawkes, Bill Russell, Ivan Fawkes in car.

## MIKE GAUTZ

Mike Gautz was a bachelor who lived on the east slope of Saskatoon Mountain. At one time he hauled firewood to town. He worked summer and winter in bare hands but on one trip to town he became chilled and died of pneumonia. The neighbours talked of pigs, horses, chickens, flies, mice and a dog pervading the house thus the floor would be unsightly. The state of the floor never bothered Mike though as he did not eat off it! The neighbors were also agreed that Mike made the best flapjacks in the district.



## BILLY AND VIOLET GARDNER — by Violet Gee

In the year of 1911, my husband, Billy Gardner emigrated to Canada along with many other fellows from England. Thoughts of taking up a homestead and having a farm and maybe making a fortune appealed to them.

Bill arrived in Red Deer and after spending some time there he joined some friends he had met who were travelling by oxen to Athabasca and Bear Lake. By the time they arrived at Athabasca, winter had set in and they continued their journey over the ice on Lesser Slave Lake to Grouard where they found accommodation at the trading post. After resting a few days they decided to travel on to Dunvegan. Sour dough pancakes, bannock, pork and beans was the menu for most of the journey and they must have appreciated home cooking when they finally arrived at Bear Lake.

During the next few years, he became acquainted with various oldtimers of Bear Lake and Lake Saskatoon. At times he worked for some of these people and I recall he used to mention names such as Canon Smith, the Holmes, the Grants, the Rev. Moxbay and his wife, who resided at Lake Saskatoon in the Mission house, Jack Munro, Curley Lovell, Slim and Mrs. Finch, also the Sherk family. In 1914 Billy joined the R.C.E. and served his country until 1919 when he was discharged after the First World War.

During the time spent overseas we met and were married and returned to Canada with our little girl Zoie.

I was the youngest daughter of a family of 11, five daughters and six sons. My father and mother were from the Cotswold Hills bordering Wales and were of Welsh descent. I was baptized Violet Eveline Oldham. Those days large families seemed to be the way of life and I have always wondered how there was enough to feed us all. But there was plenty. Father was a good provider and every morning he would go to the fields with a gun under his arm. He was a good shot and never failed to come home with a rabbit, hare, partridge or pheasant. Having a small holding, he was privileged to kill game. Mother was a marvelous cook so we were well fed. Father was a master carpenter and wheelwright as were his ancestors. He was also undertaker and overseer of the Parish in which we lived, yet he found time to farm the small holding that he held and raised cattle and sheep. Eventually he became the owner of 300 acres of land. Mother took care of the poultry and the dairy and I remained at home to help until war broke out in 1914. I then lived in London for a period of time along with my older sisters who were then married.

Previous to going overseas Bill had filed and proved up a homestead in the Mountain Trail area. We arrived at Lake Saskatoon in September 1919, travelling from there by wagon. After a rough trip over stumps and deep ruts we came to the little log shack which was to be our home.

We were met there by George Newstead, a very friendly fellow with a bushy beard. He was a logger and a close friend of Billy Blair. Soon we had our stove set up and a fire going and were all set to go.

Our nearest trading post was operated by Bob

Kranz at Lake Saskatoon and this was where we traded our butter and eggs for groceries. At times we were very short of food and I would say to Billy, "I don't know what we will have to eat tomorrow." And he would reply, "The Lord will provide." To which I would reply, "I suppose I will have to be the Lord then!"

Thankfully our little shack was cozy and warm. Billy had lined it throughout with some red drapes, probably given to him by the Reverend Moxbay.

My oldest son, Ted was born on the night of January 22, 1920. It was 60 degrees below zero that night. Dr. Watson made the journey in a cutter with another man. They were almost frozen when they arrived as their foot-warmer had gone out. My son had arrived an hour earlier. However, all was well and our visitors were happy to remain with us until the next day.

On another similar occasion our good friends Bill and Gyda Romkey dropped by and invited us to go to a surprise party with them. This was just at the time I was having labor pains with my fifth child. My husband had gone to fetch Maggie Watson, who was to nurse me. Time waits for no man and my time had arrived. Bill Romkey took over and delivered me of my son Fred. Yes we had some wonderful neighbors.

There were the Austins', the Wilsons and Gilmores, the Boyds, the Fergusons, Henry Staughton, the Bell family, the Romkeys and Thoresons, not forgetting our closest neighbors, Billy Blair and his brother John. I often look back and live over the nine years we spent on the prairie, good times and sometimes not so good, still they were the happiest days of my life.

It was 1927 when we decided to leave Canada for England having lost a little daughter at six years of age. We left with heavy hearts and almost empty pockets only to return to Edmonton in 1929.

Our family consists of ten children, all living, 49 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. I have the feeling that we contributed to the population of this great country if nothing more.

Bill Gardner passed away in Victoria, on December 26, 1956. In 1963 Paul Gee and I were married and have lived in Edmonton since.

Zoie remains unmarried. She lives in Edmonton and for the past 30 years or more has devoted her life to the care of handicapped and neglected children. In 1954 she was chosen as the "Citizen of the Year" by the City of Edmonton.

Edward, our first son joined the army in 1940 and served with the R.C.E.M.E. throughout the entire war. He married his wife, Nora while they were in England. They have a son and a daughter. He has been a lighthouse keeper with Nora for several years on Chrome Island and has received a certificate of merit from the British Columbia Department of Transport for the best-kept light station.

David also has been a lighthouse keeper and spent quite a few years on the West Coast, including Chrome Island. He met and married Louise English in Edmonton. At this time he was in the Army. They have a family of eight, and five are married and have families.

David is one of our poets and he has plans to become an author "one of these days."



Fred chose the navy as a career and saw active service at the evacuation of Dunkirk, and also took part in action when the German battleship, the Graf Spee was sunk. After the war he sailed in the Merchant navy. He was married in Bristol, England. He returned to Canada with his wife Elsie and for a time was lighthouse keeper at Tofino, B.C. They have three children. It would seem that the sea runs in our veins, as our youngest son also served in the navy. Since the remaining children in the family are all girls, and were born after we left Wembley I must make mention that some of the pioneer spirit has rubbed off on them, for two daughters are now farming with their husbands near Westlock. Two other daughters are still busy raising their families and have between them 12 children, and they are a credit to them both.

In recalling family background, it would only be fair to mention Billy's parents who were born and raised in the village of Tysoe, Warwickshire, close to where the Battle of Edgehill was fought during the Civil War of 1642.

The family were all devout Wesleyan Methodists. While his father was not an ordained minister, he would walk many miles over ploughed fields every Sunday to preach the gospel, rain or shine and I am sure that his influence was felt by many young people besides his own family. They were gentle kind folk who had faith in God, and lived according to their own ideals and principles.

#### ALBERT HOOVER

Al Hoover was a neighbor of Walter Irby but, like some others at that time, did little to develop his farm. Instead it was more convenient to visit the neighbors, do the chores and share their fare.

When the railroad came to Beaverlodge Al built the pool hall and operated it for a few years. Then he moved to Swan Lake to be foreman on the Borden Ranch. There he was killed, but the case was never solved, although neighbors told repeatedly of seeing the murderer in the vicinity.

#### WALTER IRBY

"Howdy! Howdy!" With a wide grin on his face and a merry twinkle in his eye, these were the words with which Walter greeted all and sundry.

Walter took up homestead duties at N.E. 34-71-9-W6 on the Mountain Trail in 1918. He arrived with Al Hoover and Frank Wilms from Princeton, B.C. Wilms had been working in the mines but Walter always managed to find a clerical job to support his tastes, so he had hired on with a chemical company. At one time his duties required him to walk close to the rim of a large vat of Epsom Salts and he was apprehensive lest he fall in. Walter was a wiry, dapper, slightly built fellow, but genial and friendly to a fault.

His home was originally in Spokane, Washington, and the idea of homesteading looked easy from a long way off. Walter never married so his quarter section and the approximately 40 acres he broke in his lifetime suited his way of life excellently. The first year he put in his "ten acres of stumps". From then on he worked out a good deal, turning his hand to whatever was offered — farming, building, store tending, playing for dances, working on the roads, driving team and a dray



Walter Irby, Bill Russell and Nellie (Kachaluba) White.



Jim Wade, Walter Irby and Cliff Hart standing in front of Walter Irby's shack.



"Time out for a smoke"—Wood sawing bee. Ted Thoreson, Chris Rutberg, Gordon Cameron, Stan Boucher, Cliff Aldred, and W. Irby.

at the Air Base, and squiring the unmarried school teachers to local events. He particularly liked acting in the winter plays the community put on and entertaining a crowd. It was all in a day's work for Walter — just get by, day by day, with as little worrying and as many laughs as possible.

One time Walter agreed to tend the local store while the owners enjoyed a holiday. The tea ran out so Walter ordered more and sold it at wholesale price. Meanwhile the price of tea had gone up and the store mistress seemed displeased to find Walter had been selling her tea at five cents below wholesale price.

Walter's standing remark whenever he was off and away, was "Well, gotta plant my corn."



He had a great sense of humor, liked his violin and piano, which were a great asset to the community dances, his pipe and his bottle.

With his effects he was most generous; his house and barn practically became public property, as they were used so much whenever anything went on at the school, just across the road from his place. But, "The more, the merrier", said Walter, and gaily welcomed everyone.

Walter liked to entertain his bachelor friends. If it could be done by a prank, so much the better. On one occasion, he knew Gordon Cameron had a goose frozen for a celebration and he vowed he'd have the goose first. Gordon got wind of Walter's plan and tried to keep an eye on his prize goose. However, Walter and his school teacher lady friend were keeping later hours than Gordon and they spirited the goose away, cooked it and invited Gordon in for a feed. Not until Gordon had commented several times that he hoped his goose was as tasty as Walter's, and had been assured by Walter that it would be every bit as good, did Gordon tumble to the fact that they had outwitted him.

Walter died at the age of 76 and was buried in 1967 beside many of his friends in the Beaverlodge Cemetery.

#### GUY AND IDA IRELAND

The Ireland family of Irish and English descent, came from Penticton, B.C. before pioneering in the Beaverlodge area. With them came their three sons, Clive, Rex and Guy and two daughters Ina and Verna.

Guy married Ida Thoreson in 1921 and they lived in Beaverlodge for three years before moving to Kimberly, B.C. where Guy learned the carpentering trade. After six years there they got homesick for Beaverlodge so took a homestead on Saskatoon Mountain. Ida claims the six years they spent there were the happiest years of their lives.

The old log school house was the center for social activities and there would often be two nights a week when things were going on there — plays, play practices, lively dances and card parties — all just good fun. "That old Mountain Trail school sure holds many happy memories for us," she said.

It was while they were on the homestead that they adopted their two children, Jack and Ina which added to their happiness. Another of their pleasures was their lovely garden and yard full of flowers. Being Irelands they also had their share of good horse-flesh on the place.

Guy was hired to build the Huallen Hall — with volunteer help. He was the only man paid — \$3.00 a day. He also framed Cliff Cassity's house for him one cold miserable fall Ida recalls.

In 1936 the Irelands moved back to Beaverlodge and Guy hauled the mail to Hinton Trail for three years. Then in 1943 they moved to Dawson Creek where Guy worked in the Dawson Creek Hotel for eight years. They then had a horse ranch at Lone Prairie — 13 quarters of land and about 100 head of horses plus some 75 head of cattle. Ida says "To reach this ranch we had to ford the Murray river, ride over Table Mountain and another 15 miles to get into the valley.

We lived there around nine years and did a lot of

riding. The last ride I had there was after we sold the big ranch. We had a small place in there so that we could go in to holiday. Keray Regan and his sister Vita Peverley were in there with us. Vita and I borrowed horses from Farmer Grant and were riding around the valley when my horse got scared and threw me sky high. Luck was with me! I only got a few black marks but had to lead the horse back home, I was too stiff to get back on. I was not going to tell Farmer but he learned about it.

I had a very nice pony called Goldie which Jack Crummy rode in a race and won first prize. I went to Lake Saskatoon Fair in 1924 or '25 and had no intention of entering her. Guy was away at the Coast working but some of the neighbor boys insisted that I enter. They threw the saddle on Goldie, I didn't want to enter as I was not as well dressed as the other ladies and too they had their horses well groomed. To my surprise I won first for the pony and first for the best lady rider. Mother kept this secret from me for 40 years, about a year before she died she said she had heard those other ladies talking, they said it wasn't my riding that got me first prize, it was my good looks! Wasn't that a joke?

We had to sell the ranch on account of Guy's health so for the next two years we acted as caretaker at the Peverley Ranch as the owners liked to spend their winters in Hawaii. The next move was to buy a house in Dawson Creek where we lived until Guy's passing in 1969.

The children are both married. Ina has one boy and two girls and lives in Dawson Creek, B.C. Jack has three girls and lives in Edmonton. Ida moved back to Beaverlodge in 1973.

#### NICK AND IRENE KACHALUBA

After experiencing and surviving World War I and the constant governmental turmoil in Poland, which was originally part of Austria, Nick and Irene Kachaluba decided that Canada was a haven to take their children to and make a better home. After all, you could get land for only \$10.00 which was hard to believe, for land covered with forest was very valuable in Poland and owned only by the very rich landlord or the State. So Nick arrived in Saskatchewan in June 1927. Here he worked as a farm hand until the fall of 1928 when he met John Kuziw who was heading to the Wembley area of the Peace River country where his brothers-in-law, Mike and Stanley Kaspro were already homesteading. He decided to come along and filed on his homestead in January, 1929. That fall and winter the men helped one another dig wells and build log cabins. In the spring, when seeding started they worked on surrounding farms for whatever wages they could get.

In August of 1929 Irene and the two children, Nellie and Mary arrived. Three trunks contained all their worldly goods — linens, clothing, utensils, seeds. They were not as fortunate as some of the earlier settlers who were able to bring along their livestock, tools, furnishings, and machinery. The little log cabin in the trees, with chipmunks playing hide-and-seek through the chinks in the logs, was just too much for Irene, who was accustomed to the well-plastered, thatch-roofed



houses of the Old Country. She immediately proceeded to plaster the cabin with the help of the two little girls as Nick had gone to harvest on neighbouring farms. They gathered dry grass, chopped this up and mixed it with clay and sand to make a solid plaster for the logs. After several coats of this and a finishing coat of sand and lime, the cabin was transformed into a cozy, white, clean home. This skill locally known as Russian plastering turned out to be a source of income for the next few years.

Nelson Clow, the storekeeper at Huallen, whose own home was plastered with moss and newspapers asked to have his house plastered. The job was so successful that he would take his customers in while he demonstrated the quality of the plaster by hitting it with a hammer. In the next few years, Nick and Irene plastered over 40 houses in the area, including a school house.

In June 1930, another daughter Jennie was born to Nick and Irene without benefit of midwife, hospital or doctor, while Irene was attempting to bring home straying cows.

During the early thirties, even when the depression was at its peak the children can never remember being without food. That first fall Nick came home with a hen and seven chicks which he bought for \$1.00. This was the egg supply for the winter and together with the milk from the cow, earned during the threshing season, and vegetables harvested in shares with other farmers, food was plentiful.

During the difficult depression years the neighbors helped one another, which seemed the natural thing to do. Later when jobs became available, some left the district to move to better farms or other interests. They had visions of building a church, and even had 2 acres set aside but during the second World War so many families moved that this dream never materialized. In exchange for seed grain, horses, machinery and cows, Nick and Irene cleared land for surrounding farmers. They would contract 10 to 20 acres and clear it by hand with an axe and a grub hoe. You may wonder what kept them going and how they survived such hard labor! The children stayed at home and kept things in order while they were away. When Nick and Irene finished their clearing jobs, they would come home and do their own.

It was in this period that their first home burned to the ground while they were away at a Christmas Concert. All was lost so they had to start again.

In later years they worked as camp cook and attendant; also at the airport in Fort St. John during the war years, always returning to the farm in the summer. The girls were home alone during the winter when they were a little older.

When the girls grew up and married, Nick and Irene sold their farm and are now retired in Grande Prairie where they still maintain a huge garden of vegetables and flowers. Nellie, the oldest daughter married Chester White and they moved to Campbell River, B.C. where Chester was killed in a logging accident. Nellie has three children, Chester, Norman and Dorothy. Mary married Ted Thoreson and has two children, Pat and Ronnie; she and Ted live in Huallen.

Jennie married Jim Sutherland and had three children; Mickey, Darryl and Diane. Jennie passed away in 1969.

The things Nick and Irene accomplished are, perhaps to some not such outstanding achievements but they did do the things most important to them: to bring their children to a better land, with freedom to live the life they choose without the shadow of oppression hanging over them.

#### DAVID AND CATHERINE NYCHKA

I, David Nychka was born on the family farm at Beaverlodge with Mrs. Bauman as midwife. I am the second son of Taras and Mary Nychka. I grew up in the Beaverlodge area — playing ball on the school team, enjoying good horses and trying my hand at drawing pictures.

I enjoy modelling in clay or plasticine too. After a western show one night I made a whole replica of a show-down between the Indians and the white men as they hid behind their overturned wagons. Mom thought it was pretty good. She used to laugh at me too when I'd come home from school with some joke I'd heard. I always wanted to "tell her a story" and she'd act as though she wasn't interested but by the time I'd finish she'd laugh at it too.

My friend Keith Hume used to come from town and stay with me. He wasn't used to farm life. He'd say to me, "Dave, how come every time I come here we either have to shovel manure or pick rocks?"

At the age of 18 my father took me into a family partnership. I met Cathy Bue in March 1961 and we were married that October.

Cathy is the eldest daughter of Marjorie (Willsey) Bue of Huallen and the late Orvil Bue of Hythe. She took her schooling in Valhalla, Hythe and Beaverlodge.

The first year of our married life we lived in the log house my mom and dad had lived in, their early days on the farm. Cathy and I spent a lot of time visiting Jim and Beryl Bradley. We would ride the horse over, and more than once we had to walk home as the horse got tired of waiting for us. We didn't have a car so we would have to borrow dad's truck or brother Bill's car if we wanted to go any distance.

In the spring of 1962 we bought the Gordon Albright farm complete with machinery and moved there that fall. We also got our first car that year, and our first baby girl — Cindy. I was away at the Teepee Creek Sports when Cindy decided to put in her appearance. I was helping Sonny Bolin with his chuck-wagon horses and Sonny got hurt. We took him to the hospital one day and Cathy the next.

In 1963 we went farming on our own. We bought five cows from dad and hoped for the best but we were dried out. In 1964 and 1965 we had those bad wet years when it rained and rained and rained. During that time our income was mainly from the cattle and hogs. And we were glad we had the milk cows.

When we had better years weather-wise the grain prices were poor. But we increased our family again. When Cathy went to the hospital it was April and I was sitting at home tallying up our income tax. I decided if we had another girl her name was going to be Tallie —



and so it is! Many times we just did without things we wanted or needed to make ends meet, but we survived in spite of setbacks. We now have 600 acres of land, 160 hogs and 26 milk cows — and another daughter Wanda. Wanda was only 3 pounds 15 ounces when she was born and it is a real miracle that she's alive today. Cindy and Tallie are both in school.

My wife Cathy likes to sew and crochet and do liquid embroidery. Of late years she has been playing soft ball with the Beaverlodge Retreads — now the Beaverlodge Seekers. I still like to draw when I have time and retain my interest in riding horses. We still have one on the place, but mostly I just enjoy working.

Something we are blessed with is good neighbours and friends. We have spent many enjoyable times with them. And we like living here in this district. It is "home" to us.

#### MARY AND TARAS NYCHKA AND FAMILY — by Mary Nychka

In the early thirties, in the town of Hilliard 55 miles east of Edmonton, I, Mary Mayko was going to school. Our teacher assigned a geography lesson on Alberta. I thought what a wonderful province it was, the soil so rich, and so many natural resources. When the Peace River country came into the picture I could scarcely visualize anyone surviving in such a wild country. Fort St. John and other little towns were just names on the map but never did it enter my mind that some day I would be a lover of the Peace River country and all there-in.

To make matters worse, my father's hired man had a friend at Hythe (I used to address letters to him). Once he visited us telling us of this wild country and how he had tamed a mouse to be his friend as that was all the life he had about him except howling winds and creaking timbers. One day he just took stock of his life and decided he didn't deserve such a cruel environment so he gave up the homestead.

Soon school days were over and my dreams of becoming a school teacher past. Taras Nychka and I had met and we were married in January 1939. He owned a quarter of land but most of it was pasture without much future in it and we were living with my "in-laws".

During the later part of March, 1940 Taras read an ad in the Free Press for land in the Beaverlodge district which sounded quite reasonable. We answered the ad and had a reply from Mr. Halliday shortly.

Taras took the train to Beaverlodge. It was during the war and the train was so crowded he had to stand most of the way — soldiers were noisy and some were gambling and squabbles ended in fights. By the time he reached Beaverlodge he felt if there had been a train going back he would have been on it. There were only two trains weekly so he had to stick it out from Tuesday to Friday. Mr. Halliday missed meeting Taras at the train so Taras walked until he found the Halliday farm. Being tired and discouraged he wasn't about to enjoy anything! He looked the place over — buildings not much, land under snow and mud. He told me, "You'll never want to live in a house like that the logs aren't even covered up," He had decided we weren't buying.

I thought it was a silly way to judge a farm. I said "We can always build buildings and if Hallidays lived in the house I'm sure we could". His dad wanted to know about the people. Taras said, "The Hallidays appear to be wonderful people." Dad said, "That means a lot!" So I wrote Mr. Halliday we were seriously considering it and had \$1,489 to buy the land, household goods and machinery. Though honesty may be the best policy we were sure we wouldn't have a chance with such a meagre amount. But our offer was accepted very quickly and told their sale would be April 23 if we wanted to be there. We arrived in Beaverlodge on April 16, had a few days to decide what we could buy that wouldn't cost us too much. At the sale Taras felt everyone knew he was a stranger and was being taken on the horses and machinery he bought. Another thing, Mr. Halliday had told Taras that his neighbors didn't like him selling to a Ukrainian. Racial prejudice?

Mrs. Halliday left early to go to her daughter's graduation and Mr. Halliday stayed behind to finish his business. After the sale we began tidying up the place, Taras outside and I inside. I had considered throwing away a pair of Mr. Halliday's chore overalls that were hanging there but I just missed the chance to burn them. When Mr. Halliday came back he went straight to those overalls and pulled out all the money he had received from the sale saying, "I'll bet you didn't know what was in those pants!" Think if I had burned them!

When Mr. Halliday left us we were three peas in a lonely pod — Billy was 9 months old and great company for me. We had only a bed, a stove and the table and chairs, so the house was empty and large. I used apple boxes for corner shelves and stands. I brought in a table from Mr. Halliday's blacksmith shop and scrubbed it for the centre of the living room to make the room seem smaller. I made flowers in those days too so I had arrangements here and there to brighten up the situation.

To farm well Taras set a high goal for himself. He wanted his land well-farmed, well-managed and the necessary tools, good equipment and adequate buildings to do the job. Neither of us had ever been



The Nychka Family—Mary, Taras, Sharon, William, Gerald, David.



away from home before so we were very homesick. My friends and relatives received long letters as I had so much to write about the place and the beautiful country. We were shy and self-conscious so I knew we were poor mixers in the community. We couldn't get over the long days and we both worked long hours. Being young and energetic we both enjoyed it.

That spring after the crop was in, Taras started to clear more land. We knew what hardship meant — we had no money and our credit was nil. In the summer I picked a lot of mushrooms and we had eggs. We couldn't butcher anything as we only had one cow, one sow and a dozen chickens. Before the garden was ready to use I'd often wonder what was going to be on the table. I made a lot of cottage cheese and various milk dishes as Taras didn't like drinking milk. We had a \$5 family allowance and I boarded the school teacher for \$20 per month but most of that went for repairs on the machinery which was a must.

At harvest we had managed to get a fairly good crop and at the same time we learned we had to farm differently than we did around Edmonton — the land was so heavy. I was disappointed my garden was harder to grow. I tried to grow cucumbers and tomatoes from seed as we did at Edmonton but only once did they mature. The rest of the time it was too cold and they froze early.

That year we managed to make a \$250 payment on the land which was small but a start. Taras cut wood for sale in the winter and that helped with the groceries besides clearing the heavy timber off the land.

The following August, David was born. In Taras' life there was no time for babies but I loved my children and they were very dear to me. To save money, David was born at home and Mrs. Bauman was the mid-wife. Taras was quite upset that his wife was laid off with a baby during a busy time. That was no lying around for me. That year the harvest was better, we sold a few pigs and were able to double our land payment. More land was broken, our cattle herd increased and survival began to look more promising. What a thrill when we bought a new seed drill and the next year too when we paid off the land and bought a new tractor.

The boys were growing up. The year Billy started school John Smith put on a school bus run to take the Mountain Trail children to Beaverlodge. It was hard to see that little six-year-old leave for the day. David was like a lost sheep until Billy got home.

By now we were into more dairy cattle. I was selling milk, cream, eggs and butter and anything to make grocery and spending money as the bulk of farm revenue went back into building up the farm and for more machinery.

Then we started buying land around us and it all meant lots of work. Taras was breaking, clearing and tidying up fields continually. There was no end to work. At harvest I'd cut the crop, Taras would stook and George Jarvis was always ready to help. George was a regular Sunday visitor as I baked his bread for him. We'd enjoy him — he always complained about "this hind-end of the world" but he didn't leave it until his dying day.

Mrs. Bauman too was a great and kind neighbor. She always thought of us when they butchered or if there was babysitting to do. I called her our Welfare Agency. Thanks to people with kind hearts — we need more of them.

When David started school we had a little girl added to our family, a little doll to dress and enjoy. By that time I was a member of the Lower Beaverlodge F.W.U.A. I felt I wanted to support a farm organization and at the same time I also felt we should have our own local at Beaverlodge. So I invited Mrs. Victor Flint, our F.W.U.A. director to a meeting at our home and we formed our own group. Mrs. Maurice Lowe was the acting president. We all took turns at taking offices and I served as a sub-director for three years. I found it very interesting to go to conventions and realized that farmers have good heads for planning if they could just get fully organized.

Our boys were in the 4-H and when Sharon was that age she joined the sewing club. The Air Force had come onto Saskatoon Mountain and their wives decided they should have a sewing clinic and asked me to teach them. I went to the Home Economist for a suggested program. She was delighted to find someone interested in teaching and she introduced me to the 4-H program. Within a short time I was a 4-H leader. I enjoyed working with the young people very much and I got a lot of sewing training besides. After ten years of 4-H I retired as a leader but have taught crafts in sewing, millinery, flowercraft and cake decoration to adults. I have also given lessons in Ukrainian Easter egg decorating to craft members and to school classes. As a result of the many crafts I do I was appointed to be a judge at fairs in the Peace River country. The work was most enjoyable.

Though the boys were in high school by now we could see that their hearts were set on being farmers. We helped Bill and David to get started on farms near by which made it handy to work back and forth. They have prospered and been able to increase their holdings. David, a lover of animals, went into the dairy while Bill buys feeder cattle to fatten and sell. Most enjoyable of all are our four granddaughters and we feel very fortunate to have two wonderful daughters-in-law. David married Cathy Bue and Bill married Monique Mureau.

Sharon, after graduating from Beaverlodge went to Lamont to take nurse's training and graduated in 1970. She married Lewis Mulnyk in June 1971. He is a heavy duty mechanic and Sharon nurses at the St. Albert hospital.

Gerald was born when Sharon turned seven and his desire is also to be a farmer. He loves machinery so thinks he should have his ticket in mechanics and then take over the family farm.

In the meantime Taras took ill in 1972 and the doctors gave him only a short time on this earth, which really upset everybody. By sheer determination and God's will he lived more than two years. I had been asked to work in a Fabric Shop in Grande Prairie, but when there was an opening for such a shop in Beaverlodge Taras said, "I'll give you the money. You start your own shop!" I was delighted as I had always wanted to do this. In two weeks I was in business.



Taras was always interested to know what kind of a day I'd had and was happy it was working out.

Every month we noticed he was failing more and more and on April 26, 1974 he passed away at the age of 58. He had accomplished his goal but he didn't live to enjoy it. He will always be remembered as a hard worker — a man with great determination. He was also a good co-op member owning shares in many co-operative enterprises. He was a member of the Elks.

Gerald hopes to take over the home place and keep it in the family. My enterprise is expanding and I'm finding it most enjoyable.

#### **EDWARD BENEDICK PARKS**

Edward Benedick Parks came from Ohio, leaving behind a wife and a daughter of whom he was very proud. They never came to Canada. He worked as a laborer in southern Alberta before coming to the Mountain Trail district in September, 1917. Once here he filed on N.E. 28-71-9. Not being a very good manager for himself, he worked out, mostly for Jim Bauman and Steve Craig, while Gordon Cameron farmed his homestead. Ed was a willing worker and endlessly grateful for any kindness done him, especially if the kindness came from the hands of a lady. As he grew older he was much troubled with rheumatism and many stories are told about the potency of Ed's liniment.

Ed had quite an inquisitive nature and never wanted to miss out on anything that was happening. Gordon Cameron tells how one day when Ed was helping him dig a well he thought he'd have a bit of fun at Ed's expense. Ed was down in the well and couldn't get out without Gordon's help, so Gordon stepped away from the well and pretended to be carrying on a conversation with another person. Hearing him, Ed shouted to be helped up but Gordon didn't oblige him — just went on talking and Ed kept shouting, "Get me outa here." Finally Gordon went back to the well and told Ed it was a strange woman looking for some stray horses, adding that they were camped over on Ed's land. Immediately after supper was over that evening, Ed was away to see who the strangers were, but he never did catch up to the woman nor the horses.

When Ed became too crippled to work, he drifted to Edmonton where he was the "newsie" in the bus station for several years. It was a good inside job for him and gave him a chance to visit Peace River friends who might be passing through. Eventually he retired to a Senior Citizen Home in Edmonton, where he died in 1947.

#### **JIM PORTER**

Jim Porter, his wife, and son Ernie, came to the Mountain Trail area in October of 1916. Jim homesteaded S.W. 33-71-9. Ernie cancelled the original filer who had filed on S.E. 33-71-9 and Jim took N.W. 28-71-9 as his Soldier's Grant. Being a master plumber by trade, he found farming was not exactly his forte. Jim hired his breaking done, acting as the "Lord of the Manor" over the men he hired. Though his attitude scarcely endeared him to his neighbors, his wife was a friendly soul and welcomed the visits of her nearest neighbor, Mrs. Art Nordstrom. Ernie spent only one winter here before returning to Chicago.

The Porters stayed here from 1916 to 1927 but in that time they left twice and twice returned before finally opting for life again in the United States.

It was through the friendship of Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Nordstrom, as they exchanged plant slips and afternoon calls, that the strange circumstances surrounding the Porters' residence here came out.

It seems son Ernie had worked for a diamond cutting business in Chicago and one of his duties was to take the day's "cut" to the bank. While on this delivery job one day, he was reported to have been struck on the head and robbed. Ernie was not seriously hurt but during the investigation that followed the robbery, it turned out that Ernie's father had mysteriously disappeared. The Diamond King, as the head of the firm was known, traced the Porters to this remote part of the world to claim their land. However at that time he was not able to prove his claim.

In 1928 son Ernie rented the land to Hans and Henry Elkins. The Elkins left the land in the early thirties and once again the Diamond King claimed the land. This time he sold it to a man who was supposed to make payments by delivering so many bushels of wheat to the elevator each year in the name of the Diamond King. To avoid this, the farmer simply didn't grow any wheat on the land. Eventually the land was reclaimed and sold to a more reliable client. The Porters have left no trace of their whereabouts.

#### **EDWARD REITH**

Edward Reith tried to establish a furniture store in Clairmont but as one of his neighbours remarked, "He was away ahead of his time." Edward also was an undertaker and at one time was said to have brought in a carload of coffins over the Edson Trail. In 1915 with his wife and two daughters, Muriel and Doris he moved to a homestead in the Mountain Trail area.

The girls were growing up at this time and in need of an education that couldn't be procured here. Mrs. Reith took them to Edmonton and worked there herself to put them through school. Doris became a teacher and taught for a time at Wembley. Muriel married Wilfred Robinson, an elevator agent at Athabasca. Mrs. Reith was known to return to the farm periodically but she was not there when Edward died. He was found draped over his wood-box as if he'd just been going to fix up his fire.

#### **THE RUSSELLS**

Bill Russell was born in Renfrew County, Ontario in 1898 and after his discharge from the R.C.A.F. following World War I he homesteaded with his parents in the Mountain Trail district. Times were very difficult in the depression years but the family carried on and was a great asset to the community. Bill and his brother, Jeff could make any machinery work and could improvise attachments to make it work better. Jeff retired to the Coast, Bill ran the stockyard at Huallen for a time and was employed at the Air Base when he died in 1971.

Florence Hopps was born in Lacombe in 1906 and went to school in Athabasca. She attended Normal school in Camrose. In 1935 she came to the Lower Beaverlodge school and stayed at Marley Sherks.



There she met Bill Russell and they were married June 30, 1937.

Florence Russell taught several other schools: Mountain Trail, Aspen Dale, Two Rivers, Pipestone Creek and Beaverlodge. She started the opportunity room in Beaverlodge and taught it until illness forced her retirement in 1970. After a prolonged period of suffering, she died in Edmonton in 1973. Beaverlodge remembers Florence Russell as a very energetic, forthgoing teacher who inspired all her students. Perhaps it is indicative of her rapport with her classes when on the Russell's 25th wedding anniversary her class arranged a party for her during the school day. Fortunately fellow staff members were alerted to it and saw to it that husband Bill was invited!

There were three children. Jim attended school in Beaverlodge and graduated from St. Joseph's Business College in Grande Prairie. He died in an industrial accident in Prince Albert.

Eva received a B Sc. in nursing at the University of Alberta and married Keith Fossen of Forestburg who operates a large farm and raises purebred Hereford cattle. Eva serves as a Public Health Nurse. They have two children, Eva Lynn and Karen.

Roddy married Sharon McEachren and they have a daughter, Dione. He is very musical and had been active in Fort St. John with a music store, a dance band and music pupils. Now they have moved to Kelowna where they own a steak house, "The Stock Pot", which is going well.



Bill Russell, Florence Hopps. Anne Childs (raising her fist) Margaret Clow and Nelson Clow.

Neighbourhood outing. Mrs. Volden and Ingvoid, Margaret Fawkes, Mrs. Russell, Mr. Walker, Eunice Fordyce, Roy and Lloyd Volden and Jimmy Russell.



## JOHN SMITH — by Edith Smith

My husband's father was Jacob Smith who married Harriet Snyder of Bruce County, Ontario in 1893. From this information we assume Jacob Smith to have been born about 1872. To this marriage was born Bert, May, Rose, Nellie, Levi, John and Willie.

The family moved to Dinner Creek on the Mountain Trail in 1923, when John was 17 years old. His father filed a homestead in John's name as the regulations were that a boy must be 18 in order to file for himself. They built a big log house on this land and they all lived there.

Grande Prairie was the end of the railroad at that time and all the hauling of produce into and supplies out of Grande Prairie was done by horses. Most of the freighters stopped at Smiths for dinner and to rest their horses. Sometimes it was necessary to put them up for the night so it became a regular stopping place.

The Smiths had come from Govenloch, Saskatchewan and being used to the prairies, they found the heavy bush on Mountain Trail quite frightening. They were afraid to venture out far for fear of getting lost.

The roads were dirt roads which became impassable in rainy weather. John's family kept a team of horses ready at such times to pull cars through mud holes. They used to "drag" the road after rain to smooth out the ruts. A "drag", as they called it, was a sort of platform made of planks with two steel grader blades under it. The operator sat on an upturned box. It was pulled by four horses and John used this for years. Later when he got a small maintainer he was very happy but he still used his four horses to pull it.

In 1929 John Smith married Edith Dodwell. The Dodwells were of English descent. They farmed at Birch Hills, Saskatchewan before coming to the Mountain Trail. We made our home on the homestead and the first year we were married we had a good crop; the wheat and oats were shoulder high. We also had a large potato patch which yielded well. John usually sold several loads of potatoes in town.

The old log house was pretty cold in winter. John made a heater from a 45-gallon barrel and was kept busy cutting enough wood to keep it burning. In those days farmers used to haul piles of logs from the bush and then have sawing bees to cut each other's wood with a buzz saw.

We raised four children, Evelyn, Wesley, Elsie and Joan. They walked a mile and a half to Mountain Trail school, an old log building. The three older children did the janitor work and were paid \$5.00 a month which was divided between them. They had to start out early in the morning in all kinds of weather to get a fire go-

The John Smith home.





ing and warm up the school. They cleaned up the school at the end of the day.

In the hard years of the thirties people didn't have much money but had good times anyway. There would be dances in the school and among those who took a turn with the fiddle and guitar were Walter Irby, Bill Russell, John Dommer, the Smith boys and others. We took our children with us and when they got tired we would bed them down on coats wherever there was room and they would sleep till the dance was over. We also played lots of cards, going to each others homes and often playing all night and having breakfast before going home. We all looked forward to and enjoyed the Christmas concerts. A big event in our lives was the Fair at Lake Saskatoon.

This brings me to a word or two about John's father, Jacob. He won prizes at Lake Saskatoon Fair with his garden vegetables, also for his black Angus bull. He planted some of the first apple trees in this area and they are still a thing of beauty to this day. His land now belongs to Lyle Adams. Jake loved people, young and old, and many a winter night would "throw" parties. His "taffee-pulls" are still remembered with fondness.

Jacob built a restaurant with rooms to rent in Beaverlodge. His building is still in use — the high stucco building on the corner of 10th street and 3rd avenue. He didn't stay in the restaurant business long. He bought a farm next to John's homestead where he grew a lovely garden and had lots of fruit trees. He had a little store there too.

Around 1945 the Mountain Trail school closed and the children were vanned into Beaverlodge. John Smith drove the first school bus which was made from a 1927 Chev car converted into a truck. He put a canopy on the back, put in seats for the children and to keep it warm in winter a small wood burning stove in one corner. Later he got a three-quarter ton truck and built a van on the back of it. Later the County used the big buses.

Our children are all married with families of their own now.



John Smith on his first road dragging outfit early 1929.



An advancement! — John Smith's new road grader early in the 30's.



John Smith and his wood sawing outfit.



Evelyn Smith on the doorstep of her parents' home, the John Smiths.

## LEVI SMITH

I was born at Manor, Saskatchewan, the son of Jacob and Harriet Smith, in 1905. I moved to Govenlock in 1915 and to the Peace River in 1923. The next year I filed on a homestead there and did some breaking. Times were so hard I went out to work at Port Reeve, Saskatchewan on a farm. Someone cancelled the homestead so I stayed in Saskatchewan working on farms during the depression years.

In the winter of 1928 I was in Calgary working on the construction of the post office and then went back to farm work at Rocky Mountain House on a dairy farm. I was married in the fall of 1932 to a school teacher, Jeannette Laut. We lived at Rocky Mountain House for five years while I worked in the bush cutting mine props and hewing railway ties.

In 1937 I rented a farm at Crossfield, which I later bought and we stayed there until 1956 while I worked on oil rigs at Lodgepole and Nanton. I bought a farm at Rimbey in 1959 where we retired in 1965.

We have three children, Charles Robert Smith, Houston, Texas; Willard Arthur Smith, Rimbey, Alberta; and Lurie May Huisman, Hinton, Alberta.





Mr. and Mrs. Charlie White.

### WESLEY SMITH — by Elvie Smith

My two sisters and I were born in the hard times, which were known as the "hungry thirties." There wasn't much money for luxuries when we were growing up but we were happy playing our make believe games. The toys and things we got for Christmas were really treasures and we took good care of them. Our grandmother made most of our clothes out of used articles. It was quite exciting when we got a new pair of shoes. Occasionally we'd go to town with the wagon and team of horses. That trip took most of the day. We'd get five cents worth of candy or maybe an ice cream cone, quite a treat.

We walked a mile and a half to the old Mountain Trail school. My sisters and I did the janitor work and got five dollars a month between us. Once I saved enough to buy a secondhand bicycle. I was really proud of that. We all took turns riding it.

We used to carry our lunches to school in a tin lard pail. When it was cold our sandwiches would be frozen. We'd all sit around the big heater at noon and lay our sandwiches out to thaw and toast. The school picnic was quite an event. The ladies brought cakes and sandwiches. Several people brought freezers of homemade ice cream. We would get a sucker or a chocolate bar for a prize if we won a race.

It was around 1945 the old school was closed and we were bussed to Beaverlodge. My dad drove the first school bus. It was a 1927 Chev car converted into a truck, and he built a canopy on the back for the children to ride in. There was a little wood burning stove in the corner to keep it warm.

In 1946 we had another little sister. That same summer our house burned down. The neighbors asked us to stay at their places until another house was built. They all got together and worked on the house and gave us things like dishes, bedding and clothes. They put on a benefit dance for us. We surely appreciated the way everybody helped us out.

I quit school when I was 15 and helped dad around the farm. A year later I got my first job in a sawmill and that spring I bought a car — a 1937 Chev. After that I got my first job in Windsor Motors garage in Grande Prairie. In 1957 I married Elvie Morrison. It was October and there was such a bad storm that the roads were almost impassable. My folks didn't get to the

wedding ceremony in Sexsmith as they were stranded in different places along the way. It had snowed so much that after the reception at Buffalo Lake Hall we could not get back to Grande Prairie. There were three car loads of us stuck in the snow on the road all night. In the morning someone walked to a farmer's place for a tow.

We went to Edmonton and brought our first home back behind our car, a 1949 Plymouth. It was an 8' by 30' trailer. We parked it in Grande Prairie where we lived until 1962. We had two children, Debbie and Dennis.

In 1961 my dad, John Smith, passed away so we moved our trailer out to his farm near Beaverlodge and took over the farm. I still drive to Grande Prairie to work in Windsor Motors. Elvie drove the tractor and worked down the land. I worked in the field in the evenings and weekends. The farming didn't pay off very well. Sometimes it was so dry the crops didn't grow. Then in the fall it would keep raining and snowing so we couldn't harvest the crop that did grow. Sometimes the early frosts would get the grain.

Elvie and I have built a new house. It took us quite a long time as we did it all ourselves. We recall one dark night we were trying to finish putting on the stucco wire. Elvie was holding the flashlight while I worked. It was quite a job when all we had was evenings and weekends to work on it.

We are now third generation Smiths living on the Mountain Trail and are proud to have had a part in the development of the country. At times progress may have seemed slow but over the years the Smiths have lived well and are firmly settled. We think of the Alaska Highway traffic rushing past our door and the good times we had in the Mountain Trail school as the social centre. Times have changed but there are compensations and the Mountain Trail district is still home.

Yes, times have changed. Sometimes we think of the Jacob Smith stopping place and the teams hauling grain to Grande Prairie. Now there is a trailer in our yard. Trailers were quite unknown in those days. And we think of the settlers who came in over the Athabasca and Edson Trails. The current switch is that very shortly the trailer will be set up at Inuvik, Northwest Territories. Yes, times have changed.

### WILLIAM ALFRED SMITH

William Alfred Smith was the son of Jacob Smith and Harriet (Snyder) Smith, born July 25, 1911 at Manor, Saskatchewan.

I moved to Govenlock in 1915 and to Wembley in 1923. My father, John and I rode up in the settler's effects freight car. We lost our little white dog at Westlock and little did I know that I would be back farming there in 1951.

When we got to Grande Prairie, we travelled by wagon 21 miles to Saskatoon Mountain Trail and then eight miles to a place later known as Wembley. Dad settled at Dinner Creek and bought a ¼ section from Mr. Benson.

I drove the Mountain Trail kids seven miles to the Lower Beaverlodge school with a horse and van. Winters were so tough and the snow was so deep that



the van would easily turn over. I remember one spring it turned over in the ditch and the kids got soaked. They righted the van and we continued on home. For recreation, we held dances at Mountain Trail school. I played the violin in the band for a while. I drove mules and fresno while building the grade for the railway at Wembley. The mules knew when it was quitting time; at six o'clock they would stop work. One day the boss wanted to work longer and the mules didn't so he took a heel chain and knocked a mule down. The mule had more sense than the boss as he knew when he'd done a day's work. The depression was pretty tough. I always went hunting as game was plentiful and I kept the neighbours supplied. In the summer, mother would can the meat and in the winter we froze it.

In the 1930's, money was scarce. The government set up relief camps and we worked building roads for the park at Saskatoon Mountain. We were paid \$2.00 a day. I slept with a fellow known as Ed Parks. One morning I got up and sat on the bed. Ed's feet stuck out under the covers and I counted six toes. I couldn't believe it: I shut my eyes and shook my head and counted again and sure enough he had six toes on each foot. I left the Peace River as jobs were impossible to get. I rode the rails from coast to coast. In Vancouver I used to go down to skid row and get a full course meal for 15 cents — hard to believe now. An oyster dinner was 20 cents. We used to camp out in hobo jungles. One time we got so lousy we couldn't sleep so Chester White and I got off at Moose Jaw and went down to the river and took a bath. We made a fire and boiled our clothes in an old pail, caps and all. When my cap dried, it was too small so I split it and wore it anyway. We beat our way across to Maine. We hadn't eaten for three days. We got a job working for Main Central Railroad. We came back to western Canada for the harvest. We made \$2.00 a day. After harvest I came home. I trapped for spending money and food.

Then I left again and things started to get better. Ted Thorsen and I went to Vancouver Island and dug clams for a living. Then on to a copper mine at Anyoz, British Columbia. It closed down and we went to a lumber camp at Inglewood, British Columbia where I got my hand smashed. I was on compensation all winter and saved enough to go to Dawson City, Yukon. I set up a sluice box by the side of the street and took top soil off and was mining an ounce of gold a day which was lost gold from 1898. Within a couple of days there were at least a dozen sluice boxes set up along the river in the city. Soon people started digging farther and farther and got under the saloons. They were afraid the buildings would collapse so they shut them down. Then I cut cord wood on the Yukon, rafting it down the Yukon River to Dawson City. I later got a job at the Yukon Consolidated gold mining. While there we dug up a Mammoth tusk nine feet long.

In 1939 I came out of the Yukon and went in the shipyards at Prince Rupert. I went in the army in 1944 and in April 1945 I married Christina Eisenzimmer in Vancouver. In 1946 when I was discharged from the army I went into deep sea commercial fishing.

In 1951, I decided to go farming at Pibrock in the Westlock area. In 1974, I sold the farm and kept an

acreage where I plan to retire. We have two children, Kevin and Chrystel.

## ALLAN WATSON

Allan Watson was born at Napinka, Manitoba a small town 60 miles south of Brandon and around 25 miles from the United States border. His father came from Yarmouth, England to Manitoba in 1908 and worked on a farm there. His mother came from Lowestoft, England. Allan came to Beaverlodge in 1929 and filed on the NE-34-72-9 in the spring of 1929. Later in summer he abandoned it and filed on SE-3-72-9 in the Mountain Trail district. There was a log cabin with a dirt roof on the first homestead and he walked to Beaverlodge, 11 miles for supplies.

From 1947 to 1953 Allan was the faithful custodian of Saskatoon Mountain Park and made regular trips through it to check on fires, wood cutters, etc. From 1952 to 1970 he hauled the mail Mondays and Fridays from Huallen to Aspen Dale, a route of 22 miles. He has worked diligently to develop his farm but could always take time to play softball for the Mountain Trail team as catcher and still has the mask in his possession.



Allan Watson on his mail haul during bad weather.



Allan Watson's transportation, Model A Ford, 1960.



Allan Watson out for a drive near Lake Saskatoon, 1942.



Allan Watson and his saddle horse at the picnic shelter on Mount Saskatoon park.



The Allan Watson threshing outfit, 1966.

## JOSEPH WILLSON STORY

Joseph Willson came to the Mountain Trail area May 10, 1936 from Rosetown, Saskatchewan.

He purchased a half section from Burt Smith, a World War I veteran who wanted to move to British Columbia.

He was born in Drumba, Ontario and taught school in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan for most of his life. A widower, in 1935 he married the former Mrs. Catherine Cowan, a widow. She was born in Cobden, Ontario and came west with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Phillips in 1906, settling at Rosetown. She married Edmond Cowan in 1921. They had four children, Jean, Mary, Glenn and John. She was left as a widow in 1930.

Mrs. Willson, her four children, a brother Russell Phillips, his wife and a young daughter started out by car for the Peace River country. The trip took five days. It was a wet year and the Slave Lake had overflowed its banks. The railroad was washed out and the water lapped the edges of the road. It took a whole day to get from Smith to Slave Lake as the car was hauled through by tractor for part of the way and mule team the remainder. Around 6 o'clock they drove aboard a scow that took them the last five miles to Slave Lake. Here they spent the night. They arrived at their new home the next afternoon, October 1, 1936. There had been a snowstorm in September that year and the trees and bushes were still leaning and the crops were down.

The children started to attend school at Mountain Trail, walking one and a half miles every day. After a day or so one of them came down with the measles. In time the whole family caught the measles and it was nearly Christmas before they got back to school. A daughter Muriel was born in 1937.

Mr. Willson raised pure-bred Shorthorn cattle. He passed away in 1947. Mrs. Willson and the two boys farmed until 1963. She retired to a small home near Tom Hatton's.

The boys remained single. Jean married Elmer Lamare and lives in Edmonton. They have four children Donald, Barbara, Joel and Christy.

Muriel married Clifford Cloughton and lives at Winter, Saskatchewan. They have three sons, Ronald, Dennis and Ian.

## DUNCAN JAMES VIPOND

Duncan Vipond was born near Killarney, Manitoba on the farm his father had homesteaded in 1882. He later married Laura Ellen Hatch of Dauphin, Manitoba whom he met while they were both attending college in Portage La Prairie.

In early spring of 1919 he arrived in the Peace River country with his father-in-law and his wife's brother, James and Charlie Hatch. They came to Spirit River with a carload of horses, machinery and a Model T car, which they freighted to Rolla.

Duncan then worked with the land surveyors out of Grande Prairie and he fell in love with the Beaverlodge area and homesteaded east of Beaverlodge in 1919 on a quarter section which he later sold to Howard Halliday, and is now the Nychka place.

In June of 1919 Laura Ellen with her three small



sons; Merlin, Asa and two month old Clifford, arrived at Grande Prairie, travelling with her mother, Mrs. Hatch, who brought three motherless grandchildren; Vera, Dorothy and Wilfred. Vera later married Bud Piper and lives north of Dawson Creek.

They were met in Grande Prairie by Charlie Hatch with the Model T and loaded with three adults and six children they set out for Rolla.

They spent their first winter at Rolla. By early spring of 1920 Duncan had a log cabin built and moved his family to Beaverlodge. They planted a large garden and each summer Laura sold vegetables to the I.E. Gaudin store.

In need of a water supply they dug a big well, cribbing-up as they went, helped by a neighbour referred to as "Mock". They were very suddenly soaked when they hit an artisan well which served the farm for many, many years. Their fourth son, Stanley, was born in June, 1920 on the homestead and that summer Duncan was injured badly while building a barn.

Both Merlin and Asa started school at the Mountain Trail school. Their first teacher was Miss Jessie Hazard.

In the winter of 1922-23 Laura found it lonely with Duncan away at work so she hitched the team to their home-made cutter, bundled the children up for the long drive to Rolla for Christmas.

She found her mother ailing and January of 1923 she took her mother and niece Dorothy to Spirit River, there boarding the train for Edmonton and medical help. Seeing her patients safely in hospital in Edmonton she and the boys continued on to Manitoba.

Duncan's father by this time was in failing health so they sold their Beaverlodge farm to Hallidays and returned to Manitoba. They had two more sons, Elwyn and Donald and one daughter Verlie who lived only five years. During this period Duncan wrote many articles for the Free Press Prairie Farmer about the wonders of the Peace River country.

The family returned to the Peace River country in 1936 to take over the Hatch farms at Rolla, B.C.

In 1939 when war broke out, Asa with his friend Grant Wetmore, a one-time Halcourt resident, were the first ones to leave from Rolla for voluntary service. They were soon followed by Clifford, Elwyn and Stanley. Merlin had married Marjorie McLean of Killarney and with two small children, they took over the farming with young brother Donald while the boys were overseas.

Asa and Elwyn brought back English war brides. They all moved on to Vancouver where Elwyn and Kathy had one daughter and he served 25 years in the police force. He is now in real estate. Asa and Elsie had two boys and Asa built N.H.A. homes in Vancouver. He later remarried Alice Wetmore and they have three children.

Clifford married Shirley Barringham and has four children. Stanley married Audrey Towers and has five children. Donald married Amy Corsby and has five children. They all settled on their own farms east of Rolla. Merlin re-married to Irene Crum and he farms west of Dawson Creek.

In 1947 Laura Vipond sold her land to son Clifford

and she and Duncan moved to Vancouver and then to North Surrey where they spent their next 25 years enjoying their fruit trees and garden and were both active in church work.

Duncan continued to farm at Rolla, driving from Vancouver and back each year until at the age of 77 he decided to retire.

Their last trip to the Peace country was the summer of 1972 when both at the age of 84 years, they motored by themselves to Dawson Creek to attend the marriage of their granddaughter, Bonnie Vipond to David Troop.

Duncan and Laura loved to reminisce with daughter-in-law Irene about the Beaverlodge era. They knew her parents well — Russ and Agnes Walker and grandparents, David and Annie Wartenbe of Halcourt. The families were joined again when grandson Arthur Vipond married Kathy Crum, granddaughter of the Russ Walkers and grandson Gerald Vipond married Merle McGuire great-granddaughter of the Wartenbes.

Duncan Vipond passed away February 26, 1973 at Vancouver leaving 21 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Unable to cope alone with the large home and gardens, Laura sold her home in Surrey and now lives at Buchannan Memorial Home in New Westminster where she is still active in church work and loves to entertain on the piano.

#### OTHER SETTLERS

Fred Grier homesteaded on the top of Saskatoon Mountain and broke 30 acres where the Air Base is now located. He had a large garden which was a source of supply to those on lower land subject to summer frosts. Later they lived for a while on the Wilms land. There were two sons and three daughters. One of the girls, Edith attended Lower Beaverlodge school for a time before her death.

The Grier family came from the United States and returned to Buffalo, New York.

Jack Shires worked for Herb Bruff of Lake Saskatoon at one time. One night he came home exceedingly late from hauling grain. When asked why he did not stop at a restaurant for a meal, he replied, "I only had a quarter on me and I didn't want to break it."

Dale Shurba operated a tannery, tanning horse hides and making leather.

Mr. Boucher prided himself in his ability to witch a well and to tell the depth of it. He grew strawberries for sale and supplemented his income by working as a camp cook. Mr. and Mrs. Boucher had a son, Joe, who now lives in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Jim Wade was a very nice, kindly gentleman who hired Mrs. Hart as his housekeeper. Mrs. Hart had two children, a son, Clifford and a daughter, Pearl. Cliff had an amazing talent for whistling. Mr. Wade was extremely fond of the children and they of him. One day when Jim was out working, some "do-gooders" in the neighbourhood came along and convinced Mrs. Hart that this was wrong, and turning a deaf ear to the children's pleas, bundled them up and left. Mr. Wade was very saddened when he returned and found them gone. Shortly afterwards his health started fail-



Cooling the engine after a day's sawing for Mrs. Hanson. Sam Cahoon, John Smith, Lloyd English, Jim McLauchlan, Harry Dodwell.



Afternoon gathering—Dot Smith, June Smith, Marie English, Edith Smith, Sam Cahoon, Nellie Cahoon, Hazel English, Gertrude Hewitt.

ing and relatives from Saskatchewan came and took him back there to live. Jim Wade died a sad, lonely man; everyone says he deserved much better. Mr. Wade and Mrs. Hart were well thought of in the area. Since they lived adjacent to the Mountain Trail school, they frequently had children staying with them to attend social functions rather than having to walk home late at night and return next morning.

Bill Russell had a 20 Essex that used to smoke a lot. He was quite angry one day coming home from Grande Prairie, nearly to the top of Richmond Hill, when someone stopped him and told him it was on fire. He had to back to the bottom of the hill to get going again.

Bill's younger brother Jeff was not without musical talents, being famous for his ability to play the bagpipes. As a young man he purchased and operated a hand-feed threshing machine. His assistant in this business venture was Ted Thoreson. At the beginning of the war Jeff joined the Air Force. After the war, he purchased an orchard on Vancouver Island, married and had children. At last word he was retired and living on an acreage out of Chilliwack, B.C.

Mr. and Mrs. Chris Rutberg came to this area from Vulcan, Alberta and purchased the homestead quarter which had belonged to Jeff Russell. They had two children, Billy and Nima. Billy is married and resides in Grande Prairie and Nima is married and living in Fort St. John. Mrs. Rutberg passed away at an early



Lloyd English, Gertrude Hewitt, Marie English, Kathleen Cameron, Stacy English.

age of cancer. When the children were grown Mr. Rutberg moved to the Fort McMurray area where he is now retired. The hill leading off the highway to the Air Base is known locally as Rutberg's Hill.

Gunnar Torgerson came from Norway where he had trained as a carpenter. He stayed with the Chris Rutberg family and worked for neighbours. He played the violin in the local orchestra. Eventually worked his way to Prince Rupert where he worked during the war. After the war Gunnar returned to Norway.



The rains came — A homesteader, east of the Beaverlodge River, found that the sod roof of his shack was not waterproof. A neighbor rode by one rainy day, and found him sitting on his doorstep under an umbrella reading a book. The neighbor said, "Why sit out there?" and the homesteader said, "Well it is just as wet inside as it is outside, and a heap more cheerful out here."







# RIO GRANDE

## FRANK ALEXANDER

Some thought that Frank Alexander came from Montana and that he was well fixed financially. Regardless, he was a pleasant chap. He wintered the herd of about 20 well bred horses he brought in the fall of 1913 at Anton Dahls. In exchange Anton, Ben and Elmer used some of them the following summer to break land. He stayed with "Automatic" Campbell until about 1917 when he homesteaded west of Rio Grande, west of the Hoover place. It is not known whether or not he proved up nor when he left the homestead.

One winter he had the good fortune to trap a silver fox which he sold for \$2200.00. Along with his trapping ability he loved nature and always carried a camera. He was mainly responsible, financially, for starting the once-famous Buffalo Lakes Sawmill.

Nothing is known of his whereabouts after leaving the Rio Grande district; but these jottings will be in his memory.

## EDWARD AND KATHERINE ARGYLE

The "Duke" as he is often known by his friends hails from Birmingham but his parents came from Scotland.

A harvest excursion brought him west from Ontario to Lake Saskatoon in 1928. He came to Rio Grande in 1929 and remembers how he packed all his groceries and flour, besides himself on his horse. Once on the horse he didn't get off.

Ted remembers when Cook and Elliott had to take the big steamer down the very steep Wapiti hill to the sawmill; the ball joint of the front steering was faulty,

hence it was sent down backwards by means of a long cable wound winch-wise around the pulley.

With the nucleus of a saddle horse, a good axe and a lot of stubborn independence, Ted stayed with it and made a farm.

He married Katherine Senenko in 1936. At one time when his wife was ill and he was needed to mind the children he would plough with horses at night.

He was one of the helpers on the Monkman Pass Project in 1937.

Their daughter Julie married Frank Sawchuck. Son Albert has travelled far and wide in oil exploration and is now in the real-estate business.

## WILLIAM S. ANTCLIFFE

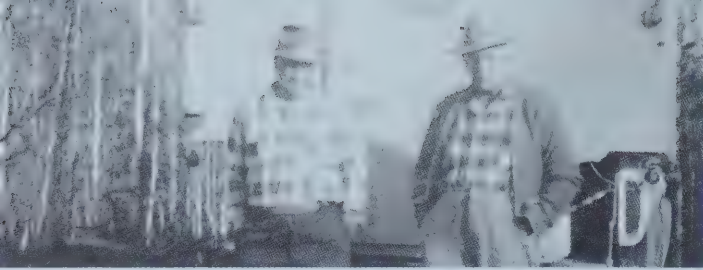
William S. Antcliffe, a native of England was an early settler in the Rio Grande district. He filed on SE 32-70-12 in 1916 and resided there, a bachelor until early in the 1950's when he took up residence at Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie. Quiet in manner and a good neighbor, it was with much regret that Rio Grande heard of his passing.

Billy Antcliffe always bought flour in 100 pound bags. His shack being small, he would put the sack at the head of his bed for a pillow. Gradually the pillow got thinner and thinner and eventually another appeared to replace it.

## THE AL AND LIZZIE BARKER STORY

This book would not be complete without saying a few words on behalf of the Al Barker family. They moved away and Mrs. Barker is now deceased but must not be forgotten. Al and Lizzie with their three children, Hilt, Marion and Mac with Al's two brothers, Tom and Jack came to Rio Grande in the 30's and farmed west of the hamlet. In those early days Hilt used to play his violin for dances. Later he married Elnora Solesomson who taught at Caribou school. They





Hilt Barker and Alphonse Cook in the 1950's.

had three children, twins Dorcas and Donald and then Chris. Elnora later taught for years at the Elmworth school until the time of her death. Marion married Alfred Cunningham and moved to Telkwa, British Columbia and they have two children Betty and Jean. Marion passed away in 1973. Mac married May Bolin and had one son, Roger.

Al Barker now lives with his son-in-law, Alf Cunningham in Telkwa, B.C.

Hilt was fatally injured in a car accident but the Barkers will long be remembered for their hospitality in Rio Grande.

#### **THE BARRETT AND FINN STORY — by Pearl Cook**

The Finn brothers settled east of Rio Grande. Bill and Tim came first and homesteaded for some years. I would presume it would be in the 20's. Later their sister, Mrs. Barrett came out west from Ontario with her two children Joe and Marian. Another brother, James who had served in the U.S. Navy also came with them. He was in poor health and passed away in 1939. Bill and Tim were also joined later by brother Paddy. They were a jolly group of Irishmen. Joe Barrett worked in Bill Adams store in Beaverlodge for some time. He was a popular young man and fine violinist. He soon became a part of one of Beaverlodge's first orchestras. His sister Marian took nurse's training and after graduating worked in the Grande Prairie hospital.

A few years later Joe Barrett bought the Rio Grande store from Ewan MacDonell and married Teresa McGoldrick of Calgary. Bill Finn passed on in

Marion Barrett and Betty and Patsy Meraw.



1931. Tim remained on the homestead and Paddy came to live with his sister, Mrs. Barrett. No one that knew Paddy will ever forget the very tough little Irishman. He had been a logger and was small but mighty. I recall a hilarious event when he arrived in church still feeling no pain from a fling. He pulled his hat down over his eyes and sitting at the back of the church he put his feet up on the next pew and appeared to be dozing. But no, for when the Priest happened to say, "And you know who is head of our church", Paddy roared out, loud and clear, "Sure, it's the Pope!" Well poor Father Crean nearly broke up and so did the congregation. That was Paddy.

Joe Barrett sold the store to Bill Wilson of Grande Prairie and Marian, Joe's sister married Bill. Mrs. Barrett sold her land to Alphonse Cook and she and Joe and family moved to Calgary. War broke out and Bill was called up so the store changed hands again to Joe Ralph of Grande Prairie. Marian moved to Calgary where she resumed her career in nursing. Tim sold his farm to Conley Martin and returned to Calgary. Both he and his sister passed on in Calgary.

Joe and wife and family reside in Calgary now, as do Marian and Bill Wilson. Marian and Bill still come back and visit their old friends every so often. So, the Finn brothers are gone, but not forgotten.

#### **GEORGE BEADLE**

George James Beadle was born in London, England in 1887. He lived his boyhood years on the Jersey Island where with his schooling he received some training in agriculture, thus his introduction to farming.

He came to Canada in 1899 and worked on a farm in Kincardine, Ontario, later moving west to Ladner, B.C. where again he worked on a farm. His next move was to the Red Deer area where he acquired a quarter section of land.

In 1914 George came into the Peace River country and took up his homestead. In 1915 he returned to Kincardine and married Miss Sarah Ellen Tomilson. In his early homestead years he worked seasonally for George Crummy of Grande Prairie.

George Beadle farmed in the Leighmore district from 1914 until 1946 when he retired to Edmonton until his death. During this period of years he progressed from the homestead, S.W. 10-71-11-6 to three quarters of land. He was post master at Leighmore from the early twenties until 1941.

Sarah Beadle died in January, 1931 leaving four children aged three years to 14, thus her life as a Peace River pioneer was cut short.

The children are still living, Mrs. Elsie McCrae of Parksville, B.C., Mrs. Virginia McDonald of Beaverlodge, Garfield of Gibbons, Alberta and Mrs. Mary Babish of Edmonton.

#### **THE BEDIER FAMILY — by Pearl Cook**

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bedier and two boys, Darwin and Bill must not be forgotten as early pioneers of Rio Grande. They moved up here from the States and farmed on what is known today as the Liberty place. Mrs. Bedier was a former school teacher. Many hours she coached me through mathematics. Without her patience I would never have made it. Frank was an old



cow puncher. It was a delight when he rode in for a neighborly visit to curl up and listen by the hour to his stories. Sons Darwin and Bill were great horsemen. They farmed at Cecil Lake but later Darwin returned to the United States as did the daughter Alice.

Frank and Mrs. Bedier moved to the Goodfare district and later lived in Dawson Creek where Frank passed on. Mrs. Bedier never fully recovered from a stroke in 1941 and died in Victoria in 1949.

### THE JULES BOURDON STORY

The Jules Bourdon family arrived at their homestead about 14 miles southwest of Beaverlodge in May, 1921. They had six children with them. After a month of travelling by freight train from Bartlett, North Dakota to Grande Prairie, the end of the steel they moved their belongings, furniture and a couple of cows by a team of horses and wagon over the trail west to the homestead.

The horses were not strong enough to break the land so a neighbour, Charlie Ingstrom, with his oxen plowed the first three acres for a garden and a small oat patch. A well was dug and a house built of poplar logs. The first winter was one of great hardship for the money was all gone and mother Bourdon slipped on a patch of ice and broke her ankle. When she was able to move around it was with one knee on a chair. Mrs. Earl Cage cared for the youngest, a nine-month old baby for two months. They ate a lot of rabbit stew and navy beans. Canned saskatoons helped to vary their monotonous diet.

When the boys became older they trapped, which helped. Mr. Bourdon was a very good blacksmith. He did a lot of repair work. He passed away in the winter of 1939.

The family consisted of Amelia, now Mrs. Stanley Dowd, Armand, Rose, Leo, Frank and Dorothy. Rose and Amelia were talented in oil painting and playing the piano.

Rose and her father were fording the Wapiti River by wagon when suddenly the wagon box was swept off the wagon and was taken away down the stream. Rose was swept away with it and not until later was she found dead, by Tom Bell a neighbour. She was 13 years old.

Mrs. Bourdon was a hard-working woman. A story is still remembered of the days when two old settlers, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Scheill held an annual turkey shoot to which every man, woman and child came. Later Mrs. Scheill met Mrs. Bourdon and asked, "Why weren't you at my turkey shoot?" Mrs. Bourdon replied in her French-accented English, "I would go to your turkey shoot, Mrs. Scheill, but I can't shoot."

In 1943 mother Bourdon sold her belongings and moved to Montreal. Her children were grown and had moved away from the farm.

The farm is now owned by the Hatton family.

### FLETCHER BREDIN

Fletcher Bredin lived for a time along the Red Willow river, south of Rio Grande. At that time he was semi-retired and was content to enjoy the bush life and to trade with the Indians.

Fletcher had an interesting life. As early as the

winter of 1906-07 he was one of the principal witnesses at Ottawa in an inquiry regarding the resources of the great northwest. In 1898 he was in partnership with Col. J. K. Cornwall and opened a trading post at Lake Saskatoon with Alex Monkman in charge. During the Klondike Rush he did a brisk business in selling horses. He represented the Peace River region in the Rutherford Government and later was a director of the Commercial Life Assurance Company of Edmonton.

For many years Mr. and Mrs. Bredin lived in "Twin shacks", 15 miles northwest of Grande Prairie and were well-known for their hospitality.

### DAVID CALLIOU

"Dave" Calliou came in 1894 with his parents, the Adam Callious to the Grande Prairie country when he was six months of age. They travelled by pack horse from Lac Ste. Anne north to Grouard, from there to Sturgeon Lake and west to the Smoky near where the Bezanson bridge is.

Adam had two brothers, William and Esau who came in with them. Dave's parents settled at Flying Shot Lake. A short time later Alfred Gladu, Louis Goshie and St. Pierre Goshie joined them. Here a small area was surveyed, the first in the Grande Prairie area.

The Callious hunted and trapped for a living. They had to take their furs to the Hudson Bay Post at Dunvegan for trading. Rifle shells were rationed, a family of two got ten shells and a large family got a box of 20 for a year's supply. They also got 100 pounds of flour, a little bag of salt and a plug of tobacco, all taken on trade or credit, not "treaty money" as they were not blood Indians. A few years later the Hudson's Bay Company opened a post at Spirit River and later, about 1905 a post was established at Lake Saskatoon with Leo Ferguson as manager.

Dave says he spent one and a half years at the Mission at Grouard receiving his schooling. When he was 16 years old he guided for Sgt. Clay and Corp. Blarey, then stationed at Lake Saskatoon. Dave was general chore boy as well as interpreter in both Cree and Beaver. While he was at Sturgeon Lake he acted as guide to blaze the first wagon trail from that point to the Smoky River. When this trail was being made only five horses were available, some were used to pull trees out by the roots. A ferry was put in as soon as the road was cut out. Henry Roberts was in charge of the crew. Dave also helped survey the town of Bezanson. He blazed the trail with the Monkman Pass Highway Association crews from Rio Grande to the Kinuseo River in later years.

The family used to go to Kleskun Hill to pick saskatoon berries. These were spread on a clean hide to dry for four or five days. When dry the berries were put into a sack and would keep perfectly.

They used to cut fresh moose or deer meat into strips in the fall when the meat had good fat on it. These strips were smoke-dried on racks over a low fire, then pounded to a fine consistency. Rendered bear and moose tallow was mixed with the dried berries and the mixture kneaded and formed into large molds of 50 pounds or so. The resulting "Pemmican"



was not used in winter when fresh meat would be available but kept until spring.

From camp the band would hunt game for 20 miles around, then as the game became less obtainable, camp would be moved. Dave tells of going hunting with Beaver Indians in the fall as far away as the Pine river.

Adam, Dave's father, worked for the Hudson Bay Company for 15 years and Dave bought furs for J. McCauley of Grande Prairie for 3 years.

The family had a "Free Grant" quarter section at Flying Shot in the early years. They ranged there with 700 horses in conjunction with Jack Patterson. Then Adam homesteaded at Rio Grande and had a lease along the flats of the Red Willow, with a house and barn up the river. They had 60 horses and a Clyde stallion but the enterprise was not too successful.

The trapping made a better living. Dave had four cabins and a barn on his line south of Rio Grande. In the fall he took in supplies with a team and rubber tired wagon. Mrs. Calliou would accompany him to the trap line along with four big dogs, staying until Christmas, and returning after the New Year.

Dave would do all the work cleaning the fur hides at night, his wife would dry and prepare the moose meat, when they had any. Dave says his mother saved many lives, especially as a midwife.

Dave was in World War I and went to Sarcee Camp at Calgary to enlist in World War II but was told this war would be too tough for older men. Sons Archie and Ed went overseas in that war.

Ed has been in Whitehorse since 1951 where he works with a string of 30 to 40 pack horses. Archie is farming at home.

Dave and his wife tried living in Beaverlodge for a year but did not like it and are now in a comfortable home close to the Goodfare store.

Seeing Dave and his wife walking around so spritely one is struck by their good health and upright bearing which belies their advanced years. Dave attributes some of their good health to having led a temperate life, regular hours and having kept a keen interest in things around him.

Dave has an Identification Certificate issued in 1964 that he is a member of the "North American Indian Nation" allowing him among other things to hunt and fish at all seasons.

#### **J. CAMPBELL — by Pearl Cook**

I do not know the date he came to Rio Grande but it was in the early days. He was an expert engineer and worked on survey crews. He homesteaded west of Rio Grande for a short time and helped survey for the E.D. and B.C. railway. His homestead was then taken up by Jack Redmond, well known to all old timers of this area for his work in the Government Lands Titles office in Grande Prairie. Mr. Campbell is long gone but will be remembered for the part he played in survey work.

#### **GRIFF CARTER**

Griff Carter, his brother-in-law, Emery Buckley and a friend, Billy Schaffer came in over the Edson Trail about 1915. They went on to Fort St. John but not liking the country there, they came back and took up

land at Rio Grande. They then went out and got their families and settled down in their new homes. Billy Schaffer left and went to the far north. Emery passed away in 1931 and is buried in the cemetery at Rio Grande.

The Griff Carter family sold out in 1944 and moved to Vancouver where Griff passed away and Mrs. Carter and her oldest daughter, Regina still live there. Carter's only son, Elmer passed away in Vancouver and the younger daughter, Thelma, Mrs. Alex Ray, lives in Beaverlodge.

The Griff Carters will be remembered for their happy, friendly manner. Griff used to be the square dance caller at the dances in the old Rio Grande school. Regina, Elmer and Thelma took their schooling at Rio Grande and Beaverlodge. Elmer was a catcher and played on Beaverlodge baseball teams for some time. He married Muriel Bowtell of Beaverlodge.

#### **CHARTERS HISTORY — by Cora Walker**

In the spring of 1912, Elmer Charters, a native of New Brunswick, who had moved to Saratoga Springs, New York in 1914 to obtain work, became interested in literature which he received telling about the golden west in Canada. Having three sons, he felt it would be a grand place to take them. Homesteads were being advertised. Sections could be had with little cultivating. With the three boys and himself, they could each have a quarter section. At that time girls were not important as far as owning land was concerned. They would do the housework with mother. The more he read about it the more interested he became. Finally he decided to go north. He took his three sons, Clarence, William, Melvin and daughter Cora out of school and plans were materialized.

A tragedy happened about this time. Elmer felt, in order to keep the boys in fit condition they should join the Y.M.C.A. Every week they would go for physical exercises. One day Clarence was asked by his instructor to take a certain jump. He felt he was not ready for it but this instructor insisted. He made the jump and fell and broke his hip. It was set in such a way that he had a stiff leg and was crippled for the rest of his life.

Elmer was anxious to get going as he felt he should be there in time to get some ground ready for a spring crop. Clarence was not able to go. Dad, William, and Cora left the latter part of March and had an enjoyable trip, playing checkers and watching the scenery as it flew by. From Montreal, we boarded a different type of train for the north. The air was so smoky at times that we opened the windows and would keep our heads out for fresh air. We had to sleep in our seats as there were no berths.

The following afternoon we arrived in Grande Prairie. What a forsaken little town it seemed after Saratoga Springs, New York which was noted for its beauty and fine buildings and unusually beautiful parks. I believe at that time Grande Prairie boasted of one hotel. It was clean and comfortable and I remember the brass spittoons in the lobby.

The following morning dad and Bill were on their way to the Red Willow area, 40 miles from Grande Prairie where dad had filed on a homestead. They first

had to buy a team of horses and a wagon and some supplies. I was told to stay in the hotel until they returned. The time seemed long and lonely but they finally returned. Dad had met a fine man by the name of M. Campbell, whom I believe was an engineer. He was a great help to dad as he had been in the area for some time. Bill and dad had spent the night in his log cabin, which was located near our land.

I went on the next load. The scenery was beautiful. There were valleys and rivers to ford. As we neared our home I was struck by the grandeur of the foothills of the Rockies in the distance. Some days they would seem very close and other days so very far away.

As the days passed we met our neighbors. All were very fine people; the O'Connells, George White, the Hills and many others. Oh, yes, one of the dearest was the Scullys who kindly invited me to share their lovely log cabin until we had a building erected. How I loved it there. They had a Gramophone, with many lovely Irish records which I would play often. Mrs. Scully taught me how to ride horseback. This meant that dad had to buy me a pony. He got me a beauty which he bought from an Indian. My pride and joy was that horse, Dandy, a strawberry roan. He was gentle and swift. How I loved my western saddle that daddy bought me for my birthday.

Time was passing. It was time that Clarence would be strong enough to travel. We were looking forward to their coming. How nice it would be to have mother around again to supervise the housework. What a surprise it was when we went to meet them in Grande Prairie, to find that Aunt Ida Robinson, her little girl Pearl, Joseph Twiss, brother Melvin and Clarence and mother were in the party. Aunt Ida was a widow, a fashionable Boston dressmaker. Joseph was from Boston, too, a widower. Two more homesteads were filed on connecting ours. What a busy summer we had clearing land, digging up old stumps, etc. We soon had chickens, pigs and cows. Prairie chicken, ducks and partridge were plentiful. One neighbor would dig in and help the other, so soon necessary buildings appeared. Summer picnics gave us a break occasionally. Swimming in the Red Willow river was always a pleasant pastime. We were blessed with musical people in our midst. I can still hear Mabel Duteau and Jim O'Connell with their fine voices leading the people in singsongs, down on the banks of the Red Willow after a hearty outdoor meal.

Fall was a busy season for the men. Dad bought the first threshing machine in the district. Rabbits were so plentiful that we had to put wire around the stacks to keep the rabbits from eating the grain. It seemed every seven years there was a plague of rabbits.

A group of young people would go on blueberry picking parties taking tents and cooking utensils. We would pick the berries and then pack them in bottles, cook them and bring them home. We would be gone for a couple of days.

After a couple of years I felt the need of completing my education so I went to Grande Prairie where I worked in private homes while I finished high school. I then went to Edmonton, where I went on to business

college and worked for a number of years for Hillas Electric Co.

At this time, dad and mother had returned to New York where I later joined them and worked in New York for a number of years for the Health Food Co. Clarence went to Edmonton to work at the McDonald Hotel in the buying department. Melvin went to Chicago to study electricity. He later became an expert in the field of electric elevators. Even now at 70, he is often called when trouble occurs in Buffalo and other places.

The rest of the Charters family remained on their farm at Rio Grande for some time but as years went by the east called and they left and rented their farm.

With the death of Elmer Charter's only sister, Ida Robinson he returned with his wife Nancy and farmed again for four or five years with his son Bill. The years crept up and they decided to sell out, returning to Moncton, New Brunswick where Elmer passed on and was eventually followed by his wife Nancy — and later Bill. Today there remains one daughter, Cora Walker of Kitchener, Ontario, Clarence of Kitchener who is remembered for his recorded songs and Melvin in New Jersey.

#### JOHN COOK FAMILY

John Cook visited his sons Leo and Sam at Rio Grande in 1918. He must have been impressed with the prospects there for in 1919 he moved to the district with his wife and remaining members of his family — Sarah, Irene, Alphonse, Jake, Gerard and Florence. A married daughter Rose Renninger was already here. Two other daughters Mary Querin, now settled at Rolla, B.C. and Bella Quinn, now of Elmworth came later on with their families. The oldest son John was killed in World War I. Edward died as a small child.

The family, originally from Hesson, Ontario came to Grande Prairie from Compeer, Alberta by train. Their livestock and machinery were loaded on two box cars. It took two days to herd the 25 horses and cows and to drive the wagon loads of furniture and machinery to Rio Grande. The first night the family stayed at Ireland's half-way House. The next day they went on to Leo's place at Hazelmere. John settled at Rio Grande on N.E. 35-70-12 where they lived out the rest of their days.



The Cooks: Alphonse, Pearl with Sharon and Larry.



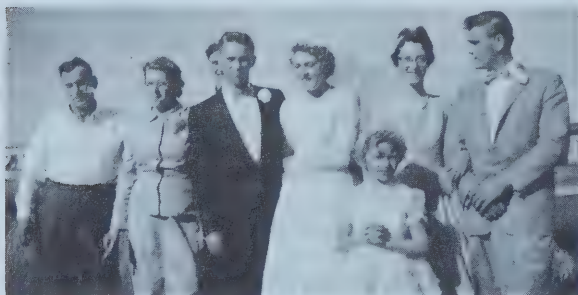
John Cook will always be remembered for his ability to walk. It would take a spry young man to keep up with him, walking at a trotting pace down the country road, with his ever present cane. The family remembers with affection his snow white hair and beard and his twinkling blue eyes. Nor have they forgotten the words of wisdom he passed out for the benefit of old and young alike.

The John Cook household was famous for its hospitality. They were great gardeners and the huge barrel of saurkraut they made every fall had a special flavour not tasted since.

The Cooks had the last steam threshing outfit and it operated as late as 1928. Their steam engine was the one Alphonse used to power his saw mill on the Wapiti and the one the Argyles had difficulty getting to its site. The family remembers the time too that Alphonse was inside the boiler and the door slammed shut on him. He was able to get an arm out and put a note on the dog's collar. The dog took the note home and barked so insistently that the family finally got the message and went to his rescue.

Of the 12 children Edward died as a child, Johnny was killed in World War II, Jake died in 1935, Irene married Jim O'Connell, Alphonse married Pearl Robinson, Gerard married Josephine Bagley and they moved to New Westminster. Florence married Stan Leonard and eventually they took the home place.

John and Sarah celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1936 with all the family present except Rose. John Cook died in 1946 at 84 years and Sarah in 1942 at 78 years.



The Sharon Cook — Donald Bjerke wedding, 1960.



John and Sarah Cook, 50th wedding anniversary, 1936.

## MABEL COOK — "MA" — by Pearl Cook

Although I know another history of the late Mabel Cook, Ma Cook to so many who loved her, has been written I feel I must write my own personal thoughts about her.

Perhaps you are wondering why? I doubt if many knew her as long as I have. We first met when I was two years old. This smiling lady rode into our yard shortly after we arrived in the Rio Grande district to bid us welcome. I believe at that time she referred to the district as "The land that God forgot." She was Mrs. Ed Duteau then and through the years she remained a dear friend of our family.

Her sense of humor has never been matched. You were in her presence only a few minutes until you were in gales of laughter!

She has told me of the hardships of the early years. As a young bride from Providence, Rhode Island she came from city life to "rough and tough it" out on the homestead. Mabel told of the winter they lived on white gravy and turnips — and she wasn't kidding! Another incident was when a democrat, that is an old fashioned two horse buggy to you younger generation, pulled into their yard. A very lovely refined lady was asking directions to their new homestead — Mrs. Laura Sheppard. As they talked Mrs. Sheppard's eyes strayed to the strange foot gear on Mabel. "What are those comfortable looking things on your feet?" "My Gawd," she replied, "they're called moccasins and they're my best shoes." She never lost her eastern accent.

Mabel was a fabulous cook and her door was always open. The good Lord had blessed her with a beautiful smile and personality and also with a "voice like an angel." It is true that on a quiet early morning, the pioneer neighbours would step outside, a good half mile away or more, and hear her beautiful voice singing "My Wild Irish Rose". It drifted sweetly across the stillness of the morning. There was never a social event in the old school house that when lunch time came Mabel wasn't called upon to sing. I can close my eyes and hear her singing "Just a Wearyin' For You".

Mabel also had the only old horned Gramophone for miles around. It was always put in the one horse buggy and at a dance while some one volunteered to wind it up and change records, we would dance until daylight!

Not too long before she left us, I took her out to her dear old neighbour's Mrs. Sheppard's 85th birthday party. I'm sure that the Seniors that were gathered there that day will never forget it. She entertained us with one hilarious episode after another. Tears flowed but they were tears of laughter.

One experience told that day must not be lost. It seems that the only house big enough to hold church service in was Mr. and Mrs. Avery Kenny's, two storey house. So there the neighbours with all their children gathered for service. To make more room they sent all the little ones up stairs to play. The floor was covered with rough wide boards that had shrunk and left many cracks. The only bathroom facilities was the old earthenware pot upstairs. So little ones, one after the other used it. That was fine until in the middle of his service the good minister suddenly was





Ed Duteau, 1920.

blessed with showers. Not from Heaven but from above! The pot had overflowed!

She told of the time an old neighbour had passed away. Money and undertakers were nil in those days. So dear Mabel and Lance Dowd did all the things necessary! But again it was told with only her sense of humor. She ended up with "Best damn job you ever saw! We done him proud!"

So the years on her old farm slipped away. When I lost my mother, and she her husband Ed, she became my "second mom".

Years later she sold her farm, and moved to Beaverlodge. She had remarried the well known Joe Simms by then.

One of her duties became "head usher" at the Community Centre. Many of our now grown youngsters well remember her charging down the aisle and saying, "Shut up you little devils — or out!" But they listened and loved her for her strictness! Believe me she kept order like it was never kept before or since.

Eventually health wise she was forced to give up her job as usher, but many a happy visit we'd have and always end up in stitches of laughter.

A sad twist of fate to me was when my cousin Card (Charters) Walker was coming back to see me after an absence of 50 years — said she was looking forward to seeing her old girlhood friend, Mabel. Five days before Card arrived our Mabel left us suddenly. I am so thankful I had written her a poem — just a week before she died, for Mother's Day. It was read aloud at her funeral as a tribute. I'm sure she is laughing down at us yet and I'll go on remembering and loving her always!

#### MRS. BOOTH COOK

Mabel Cook, an old-timer of the Rio Grande District and resident for years of Beaverlodge, was born Mabel Wright Greenwood in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. At age 17 she married George Outhout and they had one daughter, Doris. Mr. Outhout was killed in an industrial accident soon after.



Isabel Perry, Dorothy Goodhand, Mabel Cook, Ellen Brown and Peggy Martin.

A few years later Mabel met a handsome adventure-loving man, Edward Duteau. He was down east on business and soon heading back out west. They were married and came to Canada, travelling west by train. In Edmonton they stayed a while helping Mrs. Duteau Sr. with a boarding house.

In 1916 they decided to come to the Peace River country. They came by freight train to Spirit River, the end of steel, and then trailed their goods and stock across country to the south west. There were others along on the train and the trail and they shared the hardships and helped each other. The Oakfords of Hythe were one family that were with them. When Duteaus reached Halcourt they stopped a while with Ben and Elmer Dahl. They settled on land east of Rio Grande, where Ralph McNeils now live.

They were good farmers and very good neighbors. Their home became a stopping place for many. The Mounted Police always stopped for a rest and an excellent home-cooked meal.

Mr. Duteau passed away and was buried at Rio Grande. Sometime later Mabel married Joe Simms, a neighbor and well-known cattle buyer. They moved into town and from that time on "Ma", as all her friends affectionately called her, lived in her house on Fourth Avenue. After Joe Simms death Ma carried on alone for some years. In 1954 she married Booth Cook, a confirmed bachelor, who was himself a pioneer of the North Beaverlodge area.

Mabel was an exceptionally good cook, famous for her homemade pickles. She was a faithful worker, in the Anglican Church, its women's groups and the Sunday school, and a member of long standing in the Eastern Star. For years she kept the kids in line at the Community Centre theatre.

Her only child, Doris Pendleton is widowed and lives in Cocoa Beach, Florida. There is one grandson, Dale Pendleton of California and he has three children.

"Ma" passed away in the spring of 1972 and left a very big hole in the community of Beaverlodge.

#### PEARL (ROBINSON) COOK

May I add a bit of my early years to the story of my life in Rio Grande. When I was about four years old I learned to ride a horse, and it became part of my life. I learned the hard way — my cousin Melvin Charters would throw me behind his snorty little bronc, and say "hang on or fall off!" I hung on and away we'd fly! Out on the range to hunt for the cows. Later when I was of





Pearl Robinson on her race horse "Rags."



Sharon Cook and the farm.

school age with three long miles to ride, away I'd go. There was always a half way stop if I was too cold, at kindly Mrs. Jack O'Connell's to thaw out in the winter with a cup of steaming cocoa. Then finally on Rio Grande Sports Day when I was about twelve years old I coaxed mother into letting me ride in the races — that did it! I graduated from my old horse to a lovely half-outlaw horse that I finally won over by kindness (and added a few gray hairs to mom's head in doing so!) But she could run like the wind and I remember how proud I was of my first "boughten" coat saved from riding races. I went to a near neighbour's house one day to show it off (and being a lover of cats picked up their big tomcat — well he christened my fur collar!) I stayed with riding just flat races until mother passed on and then the excitement of chariot races got me, and I kept this up until my marriage, going to all the sports around the country. I well remember the first chariot race I drove in. The team belonged to Bert Veldhuis, beautiful blacks. I was a bit leary as the track was a sea of mud, but he said just hang on and let them go. We went and the first few jumps I lost all sense of time as I was plastered with mud and visibility was nil! But we won! So my happy racing days came to an end. Thank God my children didn't follow in my footsteps — I'd have had a fit! Happy memories with Jean Leckie, now Mrs. Bert Dalgleish as we rode side by side in those days.

May I skip back through the years just a bit more? While I was on the old farm with mom, Mrs. Robinson I begged her (I was only 12 years old) to let me take a load of hogs to town to ship. Town then was Wembley, a distance of over 30 miles! So we loaded up the hogs in the wagon and away I went. I got there safely praying I wouldn't meet a car and I didn't. I stayed the night with Mr. and Mrs. Dan Chambers and started back

next day, but alas met one of the rare cars coming home! Somehow the wagon and I ended right side up in the ditch and eventually home in one piece.

You grew up young in those days. I'd love to live it over.

#### MY MEMORIES OF STONY LAKE — by Pearl Cook

It was the summer of '38 when I accepted a job, at \$10.00 a month! My destination took me 60 miles up the Monkman Pass to Stony Lake, a long ways from civilization in those days.

Yes — beautiful Stony Lake, nestled in the foothills. Beside the lake on the east side were five little cabins, one of which was to be my home for two months and the site of many adventures and fond memories. My boss, Mr. R. Jacobs, had leased land and built these cabins as a tourist attraction spot. He operated a truck service from his home at Rio Grande, through to Kinuseo Falls. He would pick up a load of sight-seeing passengers and come as far as the cabins — a full day's journey over pot holes, mud and bumps. After a good night's rest at the cabins, they would continue their trip to the Falls, thirty miles on.

When I arrived, broke, and scared out of my wits at the unknown, a beautiful scene met my vision — that I have only to close my eyes to recall. The little log cabins had neat little porches with steps, and were so close to the lake that on real windy days the spray would fly up on my porch. My window was nil, except for strong wooden shutters, which I flung wide during the day, and believe me, closed tight at night! A strong bar on the door was my night lock. How many times I trembled in the middle of the night when I would be awakened with someone pounding on the door.

I was soon acquainted with my duties — keep the five cabins clean, and the five boats bailed out and ready to go. Two barrels of gasoline stood there for public sale, and I must be prepared to serve meals around the clock. My little cabin consisted of a rough board table and chairs, a little cot, a few shelves and a counter — where a variety of tinned food was for sale. Last but not least, there was a small old tin stove. I must not forget my luxury — a small radio which gathered those who happened along like flies. With a final "We'll try and chop you wood as we come through, and good luck", from Rudy Jacobs, I was left to my new adventure.

Yes, I was alone till the truck came back or someone came along sight-seeing. They came by horseback, wagon and old trucks. One day I heard a roaring sound and around the bend came a motorcycle: two boys out for adventure from Ontario. I had my first, and last, motorcycle ride while they were there. My possessions consisted of three important things, my old dog Peggy, my mother's little revolver and a 30-30 rifle, which my boss had kindly left for me.

The days flew by and I was kept busy. Tourists came and went, sometimes camping a few days and fishing as the lake abounded in jackfish. It was not long before my supply of baker's bread ran out and I discovered that baking bread was another of my duties. I would rise at six, start my little stove, and perhaps it was the mountain air, or magic, I don't



know, but I learned to turn out wonderful big loaves of bread which I would spread out to cool on my counter. What happened? Someone would wander in and in spite of my protests that they were not for sale — they were gone and I'd lost the battle of my loaves. Nothing was left to do but rise at 5:00 a.m. and bake twice a day.

Gradually I got over some of my jitters, and with my old dog close beside my cot, I learned to sleep peacefully. But there came the day when I was choring around outside and suddenly old Peg bristled up and commenced barking at something around the bend of the road. There I spied a tall stranger coming with a pack on his back. Yes — my heart stopped, and I thought, "Shall I hide or face the unknown?" But it was my job, so I dashed madly into my cabin, thrust my head out the open shutters, and with all the strength I could muster squeaked out "How do you do, welcome to Stony Lake".

There stood a giant of an elderly man, who dropped his pack and asked in a quiet voice if I sold supplies and could I scrape up a meal? I gulped out a "Yes sir" and I'm sure he had the quickest meal before him he'd had for a long time. He was a lonely old prospector on his way into the hills, so we chatted a while and he went his solitary way.

By this time I had an addition to my dog family. A freighter going back and forth with supplies for the volunteer crews working on the Monkman Pass road asked me if I would keep his collie dog and small puppy for the summer. The more the merrier — so they stayed.

A group of fishermen from Grande Prairie arrived in 'high spirits' and rented a cabin for a few days. Perhaps they thought me deaf as well as dumb, but I heard them plotting to climb up a steep embankment on the north side of my cabin, where one could easily step onto the roof. The leader would stuff a gunny sack down my humble tin stove pipe, then sneak off and watch the fun. But little did they reckon with my loyal dog! I did hear them ask their hero if he wasn't afraid, but he snorted and informed them that all dogs took to him. When he set one foot on the roof, dogs flew. It was my turn and I howled as they nipped his ankles and backside 'till he reached the safety of his cabin. His buddies joined me in roars of laughter. But we became good friends. One morning they asked if they could use my little stove to cook a mess of fish and hot cakes, and I would be their guest. It was a merry meal. We polished off the top of the stove and I'll never forget the delicious hot cakes that rose on that old stove lid, and the golden, brown fish. My tormentor turned out to be a top cook.

Then came another lovely day when I was by myself. Once again the snarls arose in the air, and hair stood up on my dogs. This time it was the biggest Indian I had ever seen, coming round the bend. I sent a few hasty smoke signals straight up, and once again poked my head out and uttered a feeble "Hello". The conversation was limited to very few words. "Me catchum fish — you cookum — me cut wood". So — he catchum fish damn quick, and me cookum quicker. True to his word he quietly got up, strode outside and soon a lovely pile of wood appeared under his nimble

axe. Then away him went, leaving me with tottering knees, but gaining courage.

And so my wilderness lessons went on and I learned to love the peace and quiet and beauty of nature. Eventually the lure of the crystal-clear water got too much for me, so in spare moments when I was alone I decided I should learn to row a boat. At my first attempt, I suppose my faithful dogs thought "Well, sink or swim, we'll not desert her". So they leapt into the boat with me. In time I became a real oarsman.

When only a few people were there I was frequently asked if I would row the boat while they fished. One beautiful calm morning this led to the most embarrassing moment of my life. The fishermen had caught two or three beauties, and to my disgust threw them back. It was too much. I had to ask why? They informed me that the fish had scab marks on them from fighting. That satisfied my curiosity. Suddenly they landed a real beauty and were exclaiming over it. I leaned over to look and said "O what a shame, you will have to throw it back too". They looked surprised and said "Why lady?" I promptly said "Because it has great big scabs beside its tail". With one big roar of laughter they said "You haven't fished much eh?" I admitted it and they gently told me, "Lady, that scab is natural". I nearly went overboard with the other fish. My face was still red next day.

It seemed that up there the serenity and peace brought people's inner thoughts out, for many a time I would sit and listen to someone's problems and stories of his life. Many a card and letter came back to me after I had gone back home, thanking me for talking with them.

I laugh when I think back. Word must have got around I had a gun. It hung in full sight on the wall. More than once, someone I knew would walk in, but I first would hear a distant "HALO-O-O-O- it's me, Pearl." One day a neighbor from Rio Grande appeared with his bride. He asked permission to pitch their tent in a lovely secluded spot. This chap was an ardent fisherman and had all kinds of valuable tackle along. A few days later a car drove up and out stepped the game warden. His first inquiry was "Anybody fishing here now?" I gulped and heroically said "I don't think so, Sir." He informed me he intended to camp in one of the cabins that night so while he was getting settled, I frantically dashed for the honeymooner's camp. But the game warden had spotted their boat just coming in. I had time only to gasp "Game Warden" and he was there. That was the end of a happy honeymoon; my good friend's fishing tackle departed with the law.

The summer passed and soon it was time to leave. The next summer I was asked to return with a raise in pay. I was now worth \$15.00 a month. So away went old Peggy and I once more.

This time it was different. I could hardly wait to get back to the beloved mountains again. I had lost my fear and grew to look forward to meeting those strangers who came and went out of my life, each individual different.

There was something else different the second season. The "Monkman Pass" name and fame for its scenery had spread far and wide. I kept a guest book and people from all over Canada and the States signed



it. The road was somewhat improved so more cars and trucks were coming in. I remember one particular weekend when there were forty or fifty people camped around and in the cabins. I was kept busy. When the weekend drew to a close, they crowded into my cabin the last evening and we spent hours in a joyful sing song. Yes — people from all walks of life joining together in harmony, as our voices rang over the night air. But it came to an end when a tall quiet man arose from the group (somehow I knew he was a man of God) and said “Dear people we do not know each other, or each other’s names. We shall never in all probability be together again. Let us sing the Doxology together in memory of this special night.” I’m sure we all felt closer to our Creator when it was ended. Next morning I bid them all farewell — with a lump in my throat.

Yes, it was all so much fun, especially the day I wended my way to the little retreat among the pines, yanked open the door and there sat a gentleman — one of our prominent sport’s announcers of the time. Two surprised red-faced people faced each other for a second, then I beat a hasty retreat. Then there was the Grande Prairie gentleman who returned from Kinuseo Falls almost minus the seat of his pants. I supplied him with needle and thread, and he backed gratefully away. I wonder if these people remember.

And so they came and went through the summer. One night I awoke to hear cans rattling, and something snuffing just outside my wall. Sure enough a prowling bear had sniffed out my cold storage cache, a hole dug in the bank. So the next hour was spent with my brave dog whining and shivering beside me on the cot. I don’t know which shook the hardest — canine or female. Sure enough next morning there were huge tracks to say he had called. I recalled the story of a trapper, an old friend of mine, who had shot and killed a huge grizzly in his cabin just across the creek that runs out of Stony Lake. The old cabin was still to be seen, only in crumbled ruins.

The rain storms came and went, sometimes lasting a day or two. Then no one came in till it was dry and if someone was in camp they stayed till it cleared up. So here were seven people waiting for the sunshine. It so happened that there were three campers from Rio Grande district and four from Fairview, an elderly man and wife, their daughter and her girl friend. Out came the sunshine and someone decided “What a beautiful morning for a hike to the top of a mountain southeast of Stony Lake”. The plateau on top would afford a great view of the surrounding country.

They decided I should come along. The elderly and two of my neighbors would stay in camp. I knew no traffic would be moving till it dried up, so decided to go along. So away went Mother, daughter, girl friend, our male guide and myself. With his 30-30 rifle and my dog we started out. The sun came out for a while and we dropped our jackets on the way. When we finally reached the top and gazed breathlessly at the view, it was worth the effort. Fantastic mountain peaks met our eyes, and far distant lakes shimmered in the sun. We rested a while and started back. We had gone only a short ways when a moose dashed across in front of us. It surely appealed to our guide’s hunting instincts,

for he fired a shot, then dashed away followed by one of the girls and my dog. Our guide yelled over his shoulder, “Take the rest back, Pearl”, and vanished. I was left with Mother, her daughter and the confidence everyone had placed in me. But I had no fear. All we had to do was just angle down the mountain northwest and we’d be home. But I hadn’t reckoned with ‘mother’s sense of direction’. I started out leading, but every once in a while she would dash ahead and say, “No, no, this way”. I’d try and stop her, but she kept repeating this performance till all land marks were unfamiliar. We kept going till at last the feeling was mutual; something was wrong. Our fatal mistake was that we kept going and going. Soon the bleary sun started to sink. Darkness comes suddenly that time of year. I looked around and spied a real steep hill and struggled to the top. I could just see a lake in the fading light, so came down and said “I’m sure I can see Stony Lake but we’ll have to wait till daylight to start out”.

By this time our stomachs were protesting, but the first thing to think about was a fire: animals are supposed to be wary of one. We took stock — three matches between us. I wasn’t very bush-wise, but dug out some dry bark; the bush was still sopping from the recent rain. I finally managed to dig up a few not too wet small sticks, then lit one — two matches to no avail. Do you remember the old visor caps with the celluloid peaks on them? Well one came into my line of vision — on mother’s head. So I said, “Your cap, please Ma’m”. She was an ex-school teacher, so I had to be polite even though about that time I could have wrung her neck. Our last match flared up — met the celluloid and poof — we had a small blaze, which we tenderly nursed till a fire blazed.

Then I said, “Now comes the time to test our lungs. We must do this together and at intervals and then listen for a while. Now, altogether, — YOOOOOOO HOOOOOO.” After about an hour with our YOO HOO’s echoing around all over the place, we heard a shot. It too bounced around those mountains like a rubber ball. At least they were looking for us. Yes, our guide and his companion had found our jackets on the way back, and the mighty hunters found us absent when they reached the cabins.

It was a long, long night, then finally a far away YOO HOO answered ours, and the spaced out shots bounced and crashed, sometimes we were sure they were coming closer, and then they would fade. But we kept on and eventually the answers came nearer and nearer. At dawn a bedraggled form appeared through the bush — our guide to the rescue. Oh yes, he had thought of food, but believe it or not I was so relieved, and furious at him for deserting us, I couldn’t eat, but chewed him out instead.

So we staggered back into camp hours later. It seemed they all thought it was a lark. Not I. I felt responsible for anyone up there, and if we had started next day for the lake I had spied, I’m sure our bones would be bleaching on those hills, for we were miles from Stony Lake; and the lake I had spied was miles further away in another direction.

So the story spread, and not so many years ago a survey crew was mapping that area. A man I knew



well was helping them, he told them this story and today that high, old mountain is officially called — guess what? YOHO Mountain!

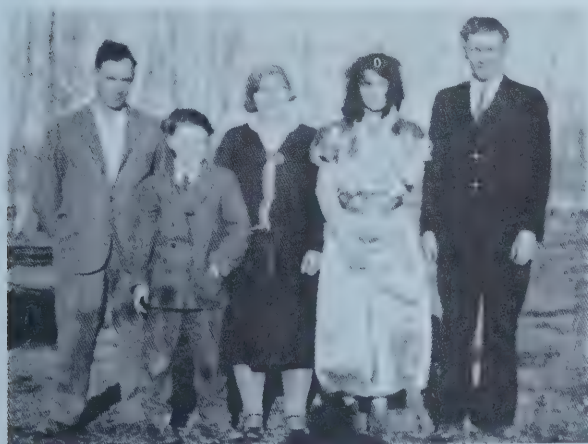
Then one lovely day, I was alone at the time, I went dashing down my little porch steps, stepped on a round stone, and away went my ankle. In minutes it was like a small balloon. I had to keep going in spite of desperate pain. I shall always remember the kindness of an old chap who was helping haul supplies to road workers. They would come as far as the lake, and then go on to the Falls next day. He turned out to have wartime medical knowledge. He asked to examine my ankle, then walked to a spring half a mile away for ice cold water. He brought it back and massaged and bathed my ankle on each trip through. I found out when I got back to a doctor I had broken a small bone. No wonder I lay many a night with a rough sling made out of a kimona cord and slung up to a spike in the wall.

On my little radio I was keeping up with outside news; rumors of war were coming up fast. Suddenly it was not rumor — but true. Then the people at the cabins at Kinuseo Falls packed up and went out. No one came in and all activities ceased. My boss was busy hauling grain. I presume he thought when he got time he'd come and pack up. I didn't mind too much, the fall days were beautiful. I was sitting on my porch steps at sundown, and inspired by the fantastic beauty of it all I wrote my first poem. Time passed. One evening I looked out to see a huge bull moose just standing outside my cabin. What a majestic sight!

It became quiet, but all was well till I drained the last drop of coal oil from the can. One night the lamp flickered, and went out. Another night I was sitting curled up fearfully and suddenly heard the bush crack and crash outside my cabin. I had never had occasion to fire my rifle, but I threw open my wooden shutters and let fly out into the darkness. A grunt and some more bush cracked and I was alone with my whimpering dog, petrified.

A few nights later I heard the roar of a truck, and my boss appeared at last. Soon we were packed up and on our way out.

What did I leave behind? Peace, tranquility and a feeling of being closer to God than I'd ever been before.



The Cook family, 1939, Sam, Christine, Ione, Vivien, John.

### **SAM COOK — by Christine Cook**

Sam and I went to the homestead in 1918 by sleigh. In the spring we had to cut a wagon road. When our children were old enough to go to school, Sam and Ralph Koebel cut a two mile stretch of road along our land.

We did a little shopping at Oakford's store at Elmworth, also at MacDonnell's at Rio Grande where we got our mail as Mr. MacDonnell kept the post office. We also went to the little log church at Rio Grande, which was very cold in the winter.

Ralph Koebel and my husband, Sam Cook trapped all winter, then went to Grande Prairie to sell the furs. They didn't know the country or that the water had risen 20 feet while they were away so drove into the river and lost one horse and almost didn't get out themselves. One horse pulled the wagon and the dead horse to the bank. All the furs were gone so eats and clothes were scarce that summer.

In the fall the men went threshing for eight weeks. The women and children had to stay alone and try to milk the cows as we had Government cattle. We also had a few chickens, so eats were better but hard to get. The cows were hard to find in all that bush. It was difficult too to leave the children so we started to farm and broke the land. Now we had a home and land to live on. My husband died five years ago at Christmas time but we lived on the farm two years longer. My son John worked the place, then I retired and am living with my daughter Ione Nichol in Beaverlodge.

Sam Cook was one of the first councillors for Rio Grande when the county was formed. He was very well liked and a much respected man.

### **THE CUNNINGHAM STORY — By Pearl Cook**

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Cunningham came to the Peace River area in 1916, from Weyburn, Saskatchewan and settled in the Rio Grande district, south west of the store along the Red Willow river. With them came Mrs. Cunningham's father and their two children, Dorothy and Alf. They shipped the first car in their district into the country from Saskatchewan — a 1914 Model T. and for some time it was the one and only modern transportation around those parts. Mrs. Cunningham's father passed away in 1918 at the family home. They told me of the trials that followed, (no Funeral Homes in those days). So Bill and Alf went to work and built his coffin, then the long night; more trips by horse and wagon to the only burial ground at that time, Lake Saskatoon. They had thought it better to lay him to rest on the farm but his daughter wanted a proper resting place.

They left the farm in 1920 and Bill went to Milk River to work for the U.G.G. elevator as grain buyer. He returned to Grande Prairie in 1923 to continue this work. When the U.G.G. opened an elevator in Beaverlodge, he came there to run it for some years. Then eventually back to the farm. Mr. Cunningham had only one leg in later years (caused from a war injury) but it didn't slow him down; he was a little man — but full of "get up and go". Living beside the Red Willow river in a comfortable home, it became a great gathering spot for people to swim, picnic, etc. and the gracious hospitality was known far and wide. Mrs.



Cunningham was a very quiet spoken, Christian-minded woman.

They left Rio Grande eventually but not before Dorothy married Gerald Quinn of the Elmworth district. Two daughters were born to them and they now live in Edmonton.

Alfred married Marion Barker and they also had two daughters, Betty and Jean. They now live in Smithers and Telkeva, B.C. When they left, the family all settled in Telkeva, B.C. Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham Senior made their home with their son Alf there. Mrs. Cunningham passed away in 1957. Mr. Cunningham still lived an active life; he had an old car and a peg-leg and all, away he'd go — it might be he'd end up in Vancouver. He wanted to go to Alaska, but never made the trip. He drove till he was 85 years of age and always made it home. He passed away in 1968.

Marion and Alf carried on the hospitality endowed to them, many old friends from Rio Grande called at their home in Telkeva. We were saddened when Marian suddenly passed on in 1973. She had been crippled as a child by polio but her merry disposition and capability never slowed her down. She hopped her lovely self through life and was dear to all who remember her.

Of their two daughters; Betty, now Mrs. Arvald Muier with four children lives in Smithers, B.C. Jean, now Mrs. Wally Tompson with two daughters, lives in Telkeva.

#### HENRY DIEPDAEL

I was born in Belgium in 1910 and emigrated to Canada in April 1914 with my father, mother and grandmother. My father homesteaded at St. Edward, about 12 miles east of St. Paul and proved up in 1916.

In 1917 my mother and father separated and mother returned to Belgium. Grandmother looked after me until her death on New Year's Day of 1919.

After she passed away father could not look after me so he put me in a home in Edmonton where I stayed just over a year. Then I was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. William Renninger, a family who homesteaded six miles west of Rio Grande. The people at the home put me on a train for Rio Grande, March 17, 1920; two and a half days later I arrived at Grande Prairie. There was between five and six feet of snow; much of it remained into May.

I stayed in Grande Prairie a few days until I got a ride out with Leo and Sam Cook. I stayed with the Renningers and went to the Beaverbrook school. The school year ran from March first to about December 20th as children had to go too far in the cold. Most of them were walking or riding horseback.

In 1921, Renningers moved to another homestead about three miles southeast of Rio Grande. The Bill Oakford store was only one mile east of the Renninger farm. Ewan MacDonell and Jack Mackintosh were running the Rio Grande store and post office. There was also a small Catholic Church built of logs. At that time all the farming and travelling was done by horses. A few people used oxen.

The winter of 1925-26 was a hard winter and again there was between five and six feet of snow. The fall of 1924 Renningers went back to the United States for a



Grandpa and Grandma Ledoux, Henry Diepdael and three grandchildren.

visit as they had a number of relatives there. I stayed with the Dick Burnett family that winter and walked up to the Renningers every day and fed and watered about 20 head of cattle.

The spring of 1925 when school started there was not enough children in the Elmworth school district to run the school so Elmworth decided to van their children to Beaverbrook. There were five children including myself. Bob Frame had the contract to haul the children with a team of horses and a democrat. When Renningers came back I moved home with them and I had to resume walking to the school which was three and a half miles away.

In 1927 I left the Renningers and went out working for wages. In 1928, at the age of 18 I filed on a homestead about eight miles southwest of Rio Grande next to Bill and Alf Cunningham.

I built a log cabin and did some clearing and breaking and got the title in 1935. The "hungry thirties" were on then and nobody had any money and there was no local work at all to get enough to eat. Many homesteaders were eating rabbits, so I decided to go to the Coast.

I went to Vancouver and the Fraser Valley for a couple of years. I returned in the fall of 1937 and after threshing stayed on the homestead. I now had a couple of horses and started to do a little farming and in the winter I trapped.

In 1938 I started a small tannery. I tanned quite a few horse and cow hides and sold the finished leather for 40 cents a pound. I did quite well at it when people were still using horses. Eventually tractors took over from the horses; I had to quit in 1948, as there was no sale for the leather.

In 1939 I met Rose Ledoux and we were married on January 8, 1940. We got more horses and a cow and started farming on a larger scale.

In 1951 Rose filed on a quarter north of my homestead, then we had a half section. We traded some of the older horses to Jonas Webber for a second-hand tractor so I farmed partly with tractor and some with horses. I also got a second-hand half-ton truck.

In 1958 Rose's homestead was proved up. We were milking five cows and shipping a five gallon can of cream a week and were doing quite well.

In the spring of 1959 I had a heart attack and had to be rushed to the Beaverlodge hospital. When I got out Dr. Dobson advised me to quit farming so on August 25 we had a sale and sold all the stock and machinery. We moved to Grande Prairie where we are still residing. I got a job with the R.C.M.P. as jail guard and am still working for them.

We raised five children, three boys and two girls. Douglas married Frances Johnson and they live in Mackenzie, B.C. where Doug works at the pulp mill. They have a boy and a girl.

Juanita, Mrs. Billy Clarke, has two boys and lives in Wembley.

Alex has worked in various places in the North West Territories.

Marie married Eddie Glowaski. They live in Grande Prairie. He is a Canfor millwright.

Leslie married Margaret Lunam. They have a boy. Leslie lives in Wembley and works for Cutbank Trucking.

### CARL AND STANLEY DOWD

Carl Dowd took up a homestead June 7th, 1921 and applied for one for his brother Stanley by proxy. Stanley came and signed up for his in August and went to work for Charlie Connelly near Wembley, and stayed there until October. At this time Silver-Tip Campbell hired Stanley and George Spangler to drive his cattle on foot to the Campbell farm about six miles northwest of Hythe. It took two days to reach the farm, where George had already put up hay in the summer. Then Stanley started cutting logs for Mr. Campbell and worked for about three weeks. He was not paid for his work so he left and walked back to Ireland's stopping place, 16 miles west and a little south of Grande Prairie. He stayed there a week until Carl returned from Saskatchewan. They bought groceries, then paid Ireland to drive them as far as a shack on the corner, a mile east of where the Rio Grande school was later built. Here they stayed overnight. The next day they walked over the hill to look at their homesteads. At that time there were four shacks on four corners of land where Mr. Hill's house was later built. Jim O'Connell lived in one. They walked back and got their groceries and also packed a B.C. heater of around 30 pounds to a cabin beside Jim O'Connell's and settled down to batch.

It had turned very cold and a couple of feet of snow had fallen. Two days before Christmas, Stanley decided to go and collect his wages from Silver-Tip Campbell. He started walking along a survey line, the snow got deeper and it was getting dark. He had passed a hay stack and when he could no longer see the survey line he decided to go back and bunk in the hay.

By this time it had turned very cold, 52 degrees below zero he learned later. He had only three matches. His fingers were so cold that he broke the first two. The last match started the fire and he kept hand feeding it with handfuls of hay. He was so cold he had to fight sleep away all night. Finally it was daylight and he started to back-track home.

Going back, the snow was knee deep and soft. When he came to dead fall, he would fall over. He looked at the dollar watch in his pocket to time himself and found he was making about one mile an hour but kept going until dark and by the light of the moon reached the log cabin. Carl asked if he was hungry. He said that he had had nothing to eat since the day before and that he was starving. Carl gave him some fried potatoes and hot tea and after taking a couple of bites, Stanley passed out. Carl put him to bed and had to cut his mocassins off as they were frozen to his feet. Three toes on one foot looked frozen and the side and heel of the other foot looked frozen so Carl got some kerosene and water to bathe them. Stanley never felt a thing for a few hours. Then the pain started and he had to stay in bed for six weeks. The old timers thought he would lose his toes and brought bear grease, skunk oil and Zam Buck. They eventually healed without loss of toes. Later that winter Stanley and Carl cut logs for a new cabin. Jack O'Connell helped haul them out with a horse and cow harnessed together, as the horse's mate had died.

In late March Stanley went around by Beaverlodge and Hythe to the Campbell farm. Silver-Tip was away so Stanley thought he would wait and he slept for two nights on an old bear rug on an upstairs floor. Campbell gave Stanley a ten dollar bill and said Stanley owed him two dollars a night for staying there and was to leave the four dollars with the post-mistress, Mrs. Hartley, at Hythe. Stanley didn't leave any money.

That summer Carl and Stanley went to Edmonton to look for work. Stanley went as far as Biggar, Saskatchewan and got a job working for Charlie Thompson, a "horse dealer". After harvest Stanley visited his sister's place at Fenton, Saskatchewan, then went to work at a lumber camp at Shoal Creek, 60 miles from Prince Albert, logging until March. He went to Saskatoon and ran into Carl again at the Empire Hotel. From here Stanley worked as an apprentice electrician for about six weeks and then went to a farm at Kindersley and worked there until October. He then decided to enlist as he would be 19 in December of 1918.

The war was over before he reached Toronto so he worked as a street car conductor until March. At an unemployment office he was asked by a clerk if he

Log and straw pile shelter on the farm of Berger Bolin, 1934.





would like to go west. The clerk sold him a ticket for \$25.00, meals included. With this he went to Regina and worked for a farmer. For the winter in 1919 to 1920 Stan was back at the homestead again and worked at Van Horne's mill on the Wapiti river for a couple of months. Then he worked for Ed Duteau in exchange for land breaking on the homestead. In the spring of 1922 Stan went to an uncle's place south of Holden, Alberta and worked in that district. There he met his brother Lance who was working nearby.

In the spring of 1923 Stanley and Lance bought some Hereford cattle and some horses and shipped them as far as Grande Prairie and herded them the remaining 42 miles to the homestead at Rio Grande and started farming. Carl came back in 1925 and took a new homestead in the Elmworth district as he had lost his other one by this time. Lance also took up land at Elmworth at this time.

Stanley sold the farm the fall of 1929 and moved to the Rose Prairie district north of Fort St. John with his wife, the former Amelia Bourden, and two children. He is now retired and living in Dawson Creek, B.C.

#### MAURICE AND CARL DOWD

Maurice Dowd and his son, Carl came west, working on the railroad as far as Watino in 1915. Maurice bought S.E. 15-71-11. He sold out in 1933 and went back to Ontario, where he later died in a nursing home in 1940. Carl rented his farm to Babe Miller and he later died in Whitehorse of a sudden heart attack.

Carl was greatly interested in skating and hockey. He was virtually a professional speed skater and at the time of his death was the coach of a Whitehorse hockey team.

#### LANCE DOWD — by Pearl Cook

Lance Dowd was born April 11, 1892 in Arthur, Ontario. As a young man he came west to Holden, Alberta to work for an uncle, Phil Connelly and other farmers in that area. In about 1917 he came to the Rio Grande area to join his brother Carl and father Maurice Dowd. Lance filed on land the SE 14-70-12 and the NW 12-70-12 in the Rio Grande area and Carl on the SE 12-70-12 in the Elmworth district. They lived with their brother Stan for a few years. As there wasn't a bridge across the river in the Rio Grande district, they had to haul hay with a team around by the Halcourt bridge in order to feed the cattle that they had on their land.

Lance often spoke of the fine neighbours he had while living on the north side of the river. There was the Jim and Maude Hatton family. One time while travelling over to their place he discovered one of their horses mired in a slough. In danger of losing his own team he hooked on to it and managed to pull it out and thus saved the horse. If you lost a horse in those days it was as bad as losing your car and tractor these days.

There was also the Jack O'Connell family. Many were the times he was asked to stop for tea or a meal as he was driving by their place. How he appreciated the pats of butter and cakes and bread that "Brigette" gave him!

On one occasion another neighbour, Mrs. Robinson was very worried about her daughter Pearl as she was

very sick with a cold and fever. Lance told her that if Pearl got worse in the night to put a light in the south window and he would see it and come up as maybe they would have to get help. He watched all night and by morning was very tired but there hadn't been a light so he was happy that Pearl hadn't got worse and was perhaps on the mend.

In 1928 Lance and Carl moved to their own land. In May 1930 Lance got his first car, a Model T. The first long trip was to go to the 24 of May Sports in Beaverlodge. A cousin, Carl Connelly accompanied him. It started out a beautiful day and Lance, Carl, Slim Knutson and other friends and neighbours were having a grand time playing ball when it started to rain. Soon the rain changed to snow. Since there wasn't a top on the Model T they decided to stay in town. After about three days they were going to start for home when another neighbour Jim Thompson asked for a ride. Being just over from Scotland and very new to the ways of the west, Jim was dressed in suit, tie and a big hat. Well they gave him a ride all right! The trails were mud and slush and there weren't any fenders on the car so Jim and everyone else was pretty mud splattered by the time they reached home.

Many of his friends and neighbours used to gather at Lance's place in the evenings, when they would sample the latest batch of moonshine and have some of Lance's bannock. His "still" met with a catastrophe one day. He had hidden it in the threshing machine, but forgot to take it out when he started the machine in the fall.

Once they played one of their practical stunts on one fellow, by changing the wagon's wheels so that all the big wheels were on one side and the small wheels on the other. Then after drinking for the evening sent him home in his lopsided wagon.

In 1940 Lance married Patricia Wells from Saskatchewan. They had a daughter, Audrey and two sons, Douglas and Patrick. Audrey married Glenn O'Connell and they have four daughters and one son and live in the Rio Grande district. Douglas is at Fort Nelson and Patrick is at Fort St. John.

After Lance's death, March 29, 1960, the farm was sold to Reg Grant.

In Lance Dowd's memory, I am sure he would not rest in peace if I didn't add this little adventure. No one but dear old Lance could have done it.

"One night in 1960 the phone rang. (I was living then at Rio Grande). Mrs. Dowd (Pat) said Lance had passed away. I phoned our doctor and he said, "Well, I'll phone our undertaker to come out!" So over I flew to Dowd's to be of help to Pat and I opened the door there sat Lance. He had revived! Soon the hearse arrived and Lance said, "Oh hell! I might as well ride into the Beaverlodge hospital with you. It will save someone an extra trip!" He arrived at the hospital and, chuckling his head off was put to bed!

But not too long after I was again called over and it was true this time. I phoned Dr. Cy and he said, "Hold it! I'm coming out to check myself." Lance was a character and a friend and a neighbor to be "remembered".

## HERMAN GOODMAN

Herman and his wife Nellie came to Canada from Montana in 1919 with two children, John two years and baby Eva. They took up a homestead west of the Rio Grande area. They came because the Butterfields, grandparents of Nellie had looked the country over in the fall of 1917 and winter of 1918 and they liked it.

In the spring of 1919 Herman came in with cattle, horses and a full line of farm machinery. He was also a blacksmith and pounded out many a plough share and shod many a horse in the late hours of the night. He was a good neighbor and well liked by all.

In later years he gave up his first homestead on the north side of the river and took one on the south side adjoining the Red Willow river.

Herman and Nellie had three more children, Wes, Ed and Lawrence. They lost their little girl Eva in 1921 with a childhood illness. Later Lawrence passed away due to a school injury, leaving three sons, John, Wes and Ed. John married a girl from Drumheller and is living in Hazelton, B.C. Wesley married Ellen Eastman and they have four children: Robert, Richard, Margo and Debbie. They live at New Westminster, B.C. Edward married Dorothy Jones and they took over the homestead after Herman's death in 1955. Nellie passed away in 1969 due to a car accident. Ed and Dorothy have two children. Lawrence who married Phyllis Spence, lives in Edmonton where he is an electrician. There are two children, Tony and Shelly. Beverly married Jim O'Connell and they have three children, two girls Dawn and Cheryle, and one boy Daren, up in the Yukon.

Ed was one of Alde's three-piece orchestra of 20 years ago. Hugh Alde played the piano or a banjo, Ed a guitar and Mac Barker was the fiddler.

## GREGORY GRAHAM

Gregory Graham, familiarly called Peg Leg Graham, came to the Rio Grande district in the early 1920's. He brushed land for people and it took in a large area. He had the unique habit of asking his employers to keep his money for him even if he asked for it. He would let the money accumulate then go on a big bender. His excuse for leaving a job was to obtain a proper peg leg; but when he returned it was always with the same old one he had whittled out of a board. When it became worn out he would simply whittle out another one!

He was minus an ear as well as a leg. He claimed that he went to sleep on the railroad track, and along came a train and it left with his leg while a runaway team caused him to lose his ear! He will be remembered for the hours he spent toiling to clear the pioneers' land

No one knows when Gregory passed away but he is no doubt whittling peg legs in the sky, and asking the Good Man to hold back his wages!

## THE MILT GRAHAM FAMILY — by Pearl Cook

The Milt Graham family came in the 20's and were not in this area long. They had formerly farmed around Kleskun Lake. They took up a bush homestead northwest of the Rio Grande store. Their family consisted of two lively twin boys who will be

remembered for their entertainment at the country dances, step-dancing while their father played the mouth organ. Mrs. Graham was not cut out for homesteading and loathed the life. But they were fine people and good neighbors. When life got too boring Milt would make a bit of brew and forget his trials. I remember one day when I was very small he came weaving into the yard. I was terrified and hid up on the roof. The poor man was so mortified at my terror that he was always sober from then on when he called. They left and were not heard from again.

## JIMMY GREEN

Jimmy came to Grande Prairie in 1928 and bought the land from Bill Liberty that had originally been the McArthur homestead.

The big barn, "Liberty Barn", with the metal roof is noticeable from the highway to Rio Grande.

His bachelor life was much enlivened by curling at Halcourt.

He died in 1955 at Chilliwack where he had been retired for some years.



A work party assembled at Rio Grande in 1938 to work on the Monkman Pass Highway.



Picnic group at Johnson's Bridge on the Kinuseo River, 1938.

## JAMES EDWARD HATTON STORY

James Edward Hatton was born at Ste. Cecile, Quebec. James and Elizabeth (Craig) came to Canada from Ireland to settle at Ste. Cecile in the Lac Megantic region. Here, he grew up and married Maude Violet Stevenson, daughter of Francis and Lucinda (Smythe) Stevenson, who had emigrated from England. Three sons, Henry, William and Raymond were born before the family decided to move west. Health reasons prompted the move as Maude and Henry both had asthma.

In 1917 the Hatton family moved to Swift Current for three years, to Prince Albert for one year then to





The Hattons change from horse power.

Rio Grande with brother William and wife Jennie (Martin) to join Maude's parents and sister Grace who were already settled there. Grace married John McLeod.

This was March, 1921 and they were ready to settle down to make a life for themselves and their family.

After the summer in a half finished barn they moved into a 14' x 14' sod roofed shack, complete with bedbugs which a bachelor had left. The shack had been poorly sodded and in rainy weather it would leak for two days after the rain quit. They slept under umbrellas to keep dry whenever it rained.

The first job Jim found available was grubbing trees by hand for a neighbour. When the railroad was extended from Grande Prairie to Wembley he got a job lasting for six months. The pay was \$2.00 per day with another 50c per day if the men stayed until it was completed. In later years he again worked with the railroad when it moved on to Beaverlodge.

On a cold winter's day when the men of the family were reluctant to venture forth Mrs. Hatton was often seen well-wrapped in fur robes enjoying a respite from housework, fetching groceries from Rio Grande, also bringing mail for neighbors.

One year after their arrival another son Thomas was born, followed over the succeeding years by Archibald (Archie), Herbert (Bert) and Donald, the seventh son. Once Jim bought a quarter of land making a down payment of \$100 which came from the sale of a silver fox pelt. The rest of the payments were met by trapping and selling weasel, coyote and muskrat pelts.

To augment their income Maude made cheese. The milk was strained into a large washtub and rennet tablets added. It was pressed, cut in blocks and sold. When not making cheese she churned the cream into butter, as much as 2100 pounds in a year, which sold for 15c a pound. She also made mustard pickles. The bachelors brought their own quart jars to get filled at 25c a quart. Maude also hooked rag rugs and knit socks and mitts for sale. In later years she spun her own yarn. Mrs. Hatton also scrubbed the school for the opening of the fall term to help pay the taxes.

A large garden was grown each year to supply the household with vegetables. Extra vegetables were traded at the butcher shop for fruit. Wild fruit such as strawberries, blueberries and saskatoons were picked for canning.

Jim meanwhile worked on jobs away from home, among them the construction of Perry Gill's barn, helping to build the Anglican church in Halcourt as well as numerous carpentry jobs for people in the sur-

rounding areas. The years rolled on the family grew older and life became easier.

While Jim was away carpentering the boys looked after the home farm and began to acquire land throughout the district. As each boy in turn wanted to establish himself independently the whole family gave him financial backing until they all had land of their own.

Jim passed away in 1950 and was buried in the Halcourt cemetery. Maude and the boys kept the farm going. It has now expanded to a much larger acreage and is farmed in partnership by Bert and Don. They also run a feed lot and buy cattle. Mother Maude says it maybe doesn't pay as well but it is a venture that allows them to work and be at home in the winter.

They each have a home in the original farm yard. Maude has retired to a small home of her own built by her sons. Here she looks forward to her grandchildren's daily visits.

Henry lives at Terrace, B.C. and works in a logging camp and operates heavy equipment.

Bill lives at Mackenzie, B.C. with his wife Georgina (Bouvier) and their four children — James, John, Myra and Ernest. He works on a loader at a mill.

Raymond was in the Canadian Forces and in 1946 married Muriel Wagner from Caledonia, Nova Scotia. They settled on the Kenny land along the Red Willow river. They have one son David, married to Margaret Martin and the proud father of daughter Shelley. David is a Wheat Pool agent at Donnelly.

Tom married Mary Cowan in 1945 and ran a saw-mill with Archie out in the Monkman Pass. They settled on a farm next to Raymond's — the Harry Brown land. They had two daughters Lynn and Gaylene and an adopted son Jerrol. Lynn died in 1968 from injuries suffered in a car accident. Gaylene married Lyle Gault in 1972 and now lives at Inuvik, N.W.T. Jerry works on a construction crew for the Wheat Pool.

Archie married Melba Neighbour in 1950 and settled on a farm, Hubert Black's land, later selling out and moving to Wonowon, B.C. where Archie was a Cat operator. After several years they moved to Fort St. John so that their four children, Verda, Marvin, Kevin and Marina would have the opportunity of attending high school. Archie works as a truck driver. Their children are still all at home.

Bert married Ellen Camplair in 1959 and they have a daughter Susan and a son Mark.

A year later Don married Joyce Hoflin of Valhalla Centre. They have three daughters, Cynthia (Cindy), Sandy and Rhonda.



### RAYMOND HATTON FAMILY

Raymond George Hatton, born March 1, 1917 in the province of Quebec was the third eldest of the family. The family left Quebec and moved to Saskatchewan when he was only three weeks old. When he was four years old they left Saskatchewan and landed in the Rio Grande district in the spring of 1921.

Raymond started school at the age of seven years and completed his public school education at the one old log school house. The school was just a little under two miles from home and the main means of transportation was his own two feet both in winter and summer.

Raymond worked either at home or near home until the spring of 1943, then he served in the Royal Canadian Artillery until 1946. He met Muriel Wagner of Caledonia, Nova Scotia while in the army in 1945. He married her in 1946 and they moved back to Rio Grande where they have resided since.

They reared one son, David Edward married to Margaret Jean Martin and living at Donnelly. They have one baby daughter, Shelley.



Raymond and Muriel Hatton and David.

### MR. HANLEY by Pearl Cook

This is a little flashback to an old pioneer, very brief is this one. There was a man called Hanley, names and dates are missing, but this little story must be told. He hired out to cook for threshers; it seems cooking was not his art but he had good intentions. He killed chickens for the threshers' supper and cooked them but — alas he did not remove the insides! I do not know any more of his history but this true story is still told in his memory.

### ALBERT HILL — by Mayme Hill

Albert Hill was in the real estate business in Calgary when we were married, after which we moved to the west coast, settling at Blaine, Washington where we lived for six years. His brother Walter had come to the Peace River area while travelling around here and there, and fell in love with the country and in a short time persuaded my husband to come up and look around. Apparently, he too liked what he saw and both filed on homesteads in the Rio Grande area.

In a few months my husband, myself and four small children, arrived to try to carve out a home in a new country. At the time we thought that we would at least stay until we proved up on the homestead. By that time one had begun to get down roots and leaving was the farthest from one's mind. By hard work the two men each year broke up a few more acres and increased the



Vern Hill and son Walter at the Rio Grande Farm, 1962.



Albert J. Hill and family, 1924. Mildred, Albert, Vernon, Olive, Mr. Hill, Rita, Tom and Eileen. Hugh and Edgar were born later.



The Vernon Hills of Rio Grande. Vern's mother and their family, 1960.





4-H Beef Club Achievement Day. 1961. Dwight Hill, David Walker, Gina and Jim Hill. They received 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th for their Angus calves, respectively.

cattle herd, and procured a start in hogs, chickens and turkeys and were beginning to feel we were real farmers. The first few months we were on the homestead they hauled lumber to build a part of the house that still stands, and finishing it as time and money presented itself. Later as the family grew it was added onto and the whole structure is still in use 55 years later. Of course over the ensuing years the house was insulated and electricity and sewage installed, but not for many years was that accomplished.

Over the years both Albert and Walter bought adjoining quarters of land from bachelors who were leaving the country after proving up on their homesteads. In 1919 the log school was built on a corner of the farm where all our nine children acquired their elementary education. Albert, incidently was secretary-treasurer of the school board as long as he lived there. We enjoyed our life on the farm in the Rio Grande area and in the community. Of course as the years pass changes come and go. We had to send our children to Beaverlodge to acquire their high school education. The boys elected to attend Vermilion Agricultural College and Albert, Vernon and Hugh each took a two-year course there. Tom took a course in Calgary and worked in the south area for a few years. The two older girls, Mildred and Eileen each attended normal school in Edmonton after graduating from Beaverlodge high school and each taught for several years in the Peace River area. Rita, Olive and Edgar each attended Alberta College in Edmonton taking business training and each was employed in Edmonton. The family are all married and settled these many years now and some of them have celebrated their 25th anniversaries. Incidentally the sons of the family are all settled in the Rio Grande and Beaverlodge area, and until very recently all engaged in agriculture, all except Edgar, the youngest who passed away in 1953.

Two daughters Mildred and Rita live in Calgary, Olive in Lacombe and Eileen in Ontario. Eileen is the only one of the girls who married a farmer.

These are the Hill children and their children. Albert married Alice Smith. They have three children. Dwight is married to a teacher, Donna MacGregor and has a son. Jim is married to Gloria Bowren a nurse. Gina May is married to Darcy Hommy and there are two boys. Vernon married Marion Heller, a teacher presently at Wembley. There are three children Walter and Eric in Beaverlodge High School and their

daughter Shannon in Hythe Junior High. Tom who married Lois Martin has three children, Tom with Fosters Seed and Feed, Edna in education at U. of A. and Greg in elementary school. Mildred is married to Bill Sperry, who works at Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Calgary. They have two children. Jon married Margaret Slater and Maureen who is married to Ian Hephher and has a boy Robin. Eileen married Bill Allin in Ontario and they have four sons Bruce, Hugh, Keith, Lorne. Rita lives in Calgary. Mrs. Hill makes her home with her. Olive married Harvey Allen, the horticulturist at the Lacombe Research Station. There are two daughters, Elaine married to Dale Leiske and Cathy a nurse. David died in infancy. Hugh is married to Irene Hawthorne who works in the Treasury Branch in Beaverlodge. There are two children, Robert in High school and Marilyn in Hythe Junior High.

I have skipped over the years from 1918 to 1972 omitting many happy and many sad incidents of which every family has their full share. My husband passed away in 1935. His brother Walter who always lived with us, being a bachelor, pre-deceased my husband by one year passing on in 1934.

I now have 20 grandchildren, many of them grown and married and working as teachers, flight engineers, industrial engineers, social service workers, secretaries and one a doctor and a nurse. A few of the younger ones are still attending public and high school. I also have three great-grandchildren of Alice and Albert Hill.

I am in my 80th year now and have many happy memories of life with a growing family in the Peace River area and often visit my families and friends there every few months.

#### WALTER HILL — By Vern Hill

Walter Hill was born at Mitchell, Ontario in 1865. He came west in 1905 and spent most of the time in the Carstairs area until 1912. In 1910 Walter and his brother Albert headed for the Peace but turned back at Athabasca where they learned they were 10 years too soon to see much development. They retraced their steps and went to Blaine, Washington. In 1917 they returned to the Peace to homestead at Rio Grande.

Walter was an ardent supporter of community enterprises and superintended the construction of the Orange Hall at Halcourt. Farming was difficult but a comprehensive program was developed by Hill Bros. He passed away in 1934.

#### WAGON WHEELS — NORTH — by Joyce Ray — Granddaughter of Robert and Minnie Hoover

In the year 1911, wherever men gathered there was talk about land — free land — free for the man willing to pull up his roots and homestead in the northern boundaries of Canada. Thousands speculated about joining the homestead movement and many succumbed to the temptations of owning their own lands and providing homes for their families — by forming wagon trains.

One American lured by the promises of a better life for his wife, Minnie Estella and their four daughters, Zelma, Rosamond Earlene, Vila Elizabeth and Dollie Evaline was Robert Grafton Hoover, of Bridgeport, Washington.



Leaving the security of family and friends on a cold May 11, 1911, the Hoover family joined a wagon train of 60 prairie schooners and headed north on the long-arduous journey.

Crossing the border into Canada at Oroville was a major step for the Americans looking for a new life. They soon discovered comforts were few and hardships and illnesses numerous on the trail. Broken wheels and fevers were only a few of the adversities which caused all but two families, the Hoovers and a couple by the name of Butterfield, to drop out of the emigrant train during the ensuing weeks and months.

Adversity struck the Hoovers after only three weeks on the trail when Robert broke his leg. Plucky and determined Minnie, who weighed a mere 100 pounds, promptly set her husband's leg and took over, driving the team, washing clothes in streams along the way and cooking over a campfire, to say nothing of keeping her eye on four busy girls.

The hardy pioneers finally reached their destination, Rio Grande, on September 19, 1911 and promptly set about homesteading the allotted 160 acres.

In the ensuing years three more children joined the Hoover family. The first child to be born on the homestead was Denzil Robert who was born February 25, 1913 and died in 1962 following an automobile accident near Corbett, Oregon. A second son, William Henry was born March 30, 1915 and he presently resides in Lacombe, Oregon, where he is employed as a logger. A daughter, Susanna, born April 24, 1918 died the following March 18, 1919 and is buried on the old homestead property. Her illness and subsequent death was the main reason for the Hoover family making the decision to return to the United States. Fragile Minnie had enough of the hardships and she wanted doctors and schools for her children and the ultimate decision was made, with the family leaving Canada in September of 1919 and returning to Seattle, Washington.

The family later moved to Suquamish, Washington where their last child, Daniel Franklin was born January 27, 1921. He now lives in Washington and is an electrician.

Robert Hoover died January 25, 1929 and is buried at Entiat, Washington. Minnie lived until June 18, 1965 and she is buried at Lebanon, Oregon.

Their eldest daughter, Zelma, celebrated her 75 birthday in January, 1974 and is a long-time resident of Ketchikan, Alaska. Vila died January 31, 1970 and is buried near her mother's grave at Lebanon. Dollie, the only one of the children to ever return to the Canadian homestead lives in Springfield, Oregon.

Her return to the old homestead in August, 1970 fulfilled a life-long dream. The trip by auto took considerably less time than that of her parents and motels along the way provided comforts not experienced by her mother in her day. It was only through considerable searching and the helpfulness and aid of the Canadians en route that she was able to locate the old homestead, now occupied by the Louis and Helen Holtz family.



Charlie Ingstrom and his racehorse, "Slim Playfellow."

## CHARLES INGSTROM

In 1914 Charlie Ingstrom, a Swedish American veteran of the Philippine War came in with Kreuze to homestead in Rio Grande. Later that year he and others who went out to enlist, rafted down the rivers to reach their recruiting depots. Charlie enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a veterinarian.

He returned to his land in 1919 and farmed with four oxen till 1922. He made his trips to town in a sulky. He began raising Clydesdale horses. Many times his veterinarian knowledge saved the lives of not only his own stock but also that of his neighbours, near and far. Too he was a harness maker. Later he began raising race horses, only one, Slim Playfellow is well remembered. He was a dandy! Mary Willis, a well known rider rode him to many winning finishes.

In 1930 Charlie was foreman of the road crew.

He carried on with his farming and hobbies until he sold his land to Albert Hill in 1943. He passed away sometime in the 40's.

## GERALD JORDAN STORY

I, Gerald Jordan was born in 1921, 25 miles southwest of Beaverlodge in the Hazelmere district on my dad's homestead in a log shack.

I took my schooling in the log school house at Beaverbrook. In those days grade eight was as far as you could go unless you had money, and there wasn't such a thing in the thirties. When I finished school I worked with dad on the farm and when I wasn't needed there, got the odd job working out. I can always remember dad saying, "Now boys if we get this work done before harvest, we can take a week off and go camping and fishing." Well we used to get it done and each year we had our holiday.

In February 1942 at the age of 20 I joined the army, took my basic training in Currie Barracks, Calgary before going overseas serving in England, Italy and Europe three and a half years.

Coming back from overseas, January 19th, 1946 I decided to take up farming and purchased the Dave Shesley land in the Rio Grande district through the V.L.A., working with my dad and brother the first year. In 1947 I decided to live on my own farm but soon found out living alone and doing my own cooking wasn't for me.

On June 4, 1948 I married Mary Harding. Together we worked and made plans for the future. We decided that we would go into mixed farming as we didn't have enough land to make the amount of income needed. In 1949 we were blessed with our only child, Donna Louise and we have enjoyed every day of Donna's growing up.



She took grade school at Elmworth and finished her high school at Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie. All through the years, she took an interest in the farm and helped in many ways. After her schooling she worked a year at the Beaverlodge hospital deciding she too liked the farm life. In 1969 she married a local boy Allan Willis who is now farming in the Beaverlodge district. We now have two lovely grandchildren which we enjoy very much.

With our daughter gone, we were left alone again. We decided to expand our farm buying the Ramsey land joining us on the east and south.

We intend to carry on farming here until retirement.

#### THE KENNY STORY — by Irene Kenny Allin

Avery Kenny was born in Gananoque, Ontario July 14, 1886 of United Empire Loyalist stock. Both his father, mother, and grandfather were born in Canada. His early life was spent helping at home while his father and two older brothers were away in the Boer War and the South African War. Avery was forced to leave school in Grade 8 and worked as a lad in a livery stable bringing home all his money for mother and sisters to buy food with.

After the wars Avery spent his summers on the surveys in Northern Ontario with his brother Carman, where he was handed the job of cook when Carman found he had hired a drunkard for a cook. Many tales Avery told of baking bread and beans in the hot sand, of portaging the canoes and shooting the rapids. One island in northern Ontario is named Alice Island after the girl he loved and later married. During the winters he worked for his dad, Dr. Thomas Kenny in Toronto, apprenticing to be a dentist. When the lure of the northwest came through, he packed in his belongings a pair of forceps, which was all the equipment he ever used to pull the many teeth he pulled out in the north country. When the Kenny children, of whom I am the oldest girl, would ride their horses over the hill on the way home from school and spy a chair out in the yard by the back door, they immediately knew another tooth had hit the dust. Alice used to say, "if teeth could grow, we would have a forest in our backyard."

Avery arrived in Edmonton, June 2, 1913. In letters to Alice he tells how he met a couple of American farmers, one of them being Carl Schieldge and hearing them tell of the great possibilities in the Peace River area, he decided to go with them, taking the famous Edson Trail. He bought a team of mules, whom he named Betsy and Darkey, and became quite famous for them as they were the only mules in the country. He said they were strong and quicker than horses. He bought a light wagon especially so it wouldn't be too heavy for them to pull. Along with his supplies, he bought a single-shear walking plow, which is the same plow which the Beaverlodge Old-timers Association now have. This plow turned the first sod south of the Red Willow river on Dumbeck's property.

He set out the first week in June, 1913 with Carl Schieldge. They were travelling light, and they didn't have the problem of getting stuck in the mud as others did who were bringing their belongings and families. They arrived at the Big Smoky and found a great

number of people camped along the river as the ferry had broken a cable and had drifted down the river. The government was supposed to come and repair it but Avery couldn't wait as he had a South African War grant given to him by his brother and it had to be used by July or it was invalid. He and Carl decided to take the wagon apart and float the supplies across. They crossed the river five times and swam the mules. While they were assembling their belongings and putting the wagon back together, an American boy drowned while swimming his horse across the river. He had been travelling with the Waldo family, who later settled a few miles from Avery. Mrs. Waldo was later to assist in the delivery of Avery and Alice's three boys, Robert, Eddy, and Arthur. July 18, 1913, Avery wrote to Alice — "Well, I have filed all right, I'll have a dandy place for you some day. I have a piece of river, lots of coal and wood, A-1 land and lots of mountain trout and other kinds of fish in the river, everything to suit. I am going to start drawing logs right away for a barn and house. Write me at Hillcourt, Alberta (this the way he spelt Halcourt for some reason.)

The next letter I have is May 25, 1914. He writes: "The May 24 we celebrated at Beaverlodge. I had to go over there with my mare to Mr. Dahl's to insure a colt for next spring, so I took in the sports. They had baseball and wrestling matches, foot races, bucking contests and a concert at night. I should think there were 2000 people there, a great crowd. I stayed until late then came home 15 miles, got home at 4 a.m. There was a fishing party coming to my place: Mrs. Shaw and family, Mr. Sanders and family. Well, as soon as I got home I started baking bread and other stuff (stuff is right.) They came along about 9 a.m. and I gave them for dinner — fried trout and baked beans, potatoes, bread, raisins and apples (stewed), tea and coffee. It was the best I had and they made out real good and went fishing and caught some nice trout and and spent a pleasant day. After they went I noticed the sow pig of mine was going to have a batch of pigs so I stayed up all night with her as it was her first batch and I didn't want anything to happen to them. This morning she has six lively pigs. Yesterday we lifted the fish net and had 18 nice trout. Carl and I dressed them and put them in a box in the river but John (the pig) came along and waded out to the box and what she didn't eat she let go floating down the river. But we got 15 more fish this morning so we didn't care too much. The colt is fine and going to make a strapping work horse. I have four hens setting on 15 eggs each."

He mentions in his letters that Carl is living with him then, also that the Dumbeck's moved into their house across the river in May 1914 and that Carl had built their house. All the furniture in dad's log cabin was made by hand, bunks, benches, tables and chairs. Carl was the handy one with the axe and he and Avery lived together for the first year or so. Carl later made a rocking chair for Alice which was a big joke between them because it didn't rock.

Septmber 6, 1914, he writes, "garden all frozen, sugar 4 lbs. for a dollar, and hawks getting his chickens (out of 100 chickens, he had 53 left.) Carl is smoking chewing tobacco because they had run out of



cigarette tobacco.” He says, “You ask what I need most? answer is ‘you.’ — and goes on to say “when the river is frozen over, I will go along the ice and get a lot of coal from the seam along the river bank. I have 40 tons of hay ready for my stock this winter.” (Twenty years later he was still using coal from that same seam.)

November 1, 1914, Mentions getting mail at Halcourt every 2nd Thursday. Also mentions that the grade was built which came down the hill to where Avery’s house was on the flat, and this grade was used by all the early settlers to use the shallow crossing in the river at that point. Hubert Black helped with the work. The day after the grade was concluded, Avery found a twenty dollar bill on the ground at the top of it.

November 15, 1914 he writes of many settlers having a hard time because of the early frost and frozen gardens. He lists every scrap of food he has in the house for Alice because she wrote she worried about his welfare. He must have just made a trip over the trail for supplies because here is what he had on hand — dry apples, 30 lbs., raisins 30 lbs., cranberries, lots of them, dry saskatoons, rice 50 lbs., beans, 50 lbs., cornmeal 20 lbs., oatmeal 10 lbs., pearl barley, flour 200 lbs., lard 25 lbs., tea 16 lbs., sugar 100 lbs., coffee 10 lbs., yeast cakes, candles. Mentions a nail poking a hole in a 100 lb. bag of sugar and he lost it all along the trail before he noticed it.

December 1, 1914 writes so excited about shooting his first silverfox, which he spied in the moonlight on the frozen river bed, and nailed it. He skinned it leaving the toenails on, and shipped it to his brother in Toronto.

January 5, 1916 — Avery and George Beadle go together back east to get married, Avery to Toronto, George to North Bay, Ontario.

Alice tells of the trip back together, in January 1916, with Sadie and George. It took three days to get to Edmonton, and three weeks to get into the Peace. The ED & BC was in the process of being built. They went on the first work train out of Edmonton. Avery had counted on the January chinook wind for warmer weather but there was no chinook that year. It was 50 below and a north wind blowing, they got as far as Lesser Slave Lake and the train froze up. Train ran out of food, light and heat, and the dozen passengers were taken to a fish camp along Slave Lake to eat and get warm while they sent to Smith for another engine. When they finally got on the train, this engine froze up. They did get to McLennan, where there was a hotel and a boarding house. Avery and George were now almost out of money. The trainmen grabbed the hotel rooms and Avery and Alice, Sadie and George got in at a boarding house. The women knew their men didn’t have much money, so more than once on the trip they pretended they weren’t hungry when mealtime came. Now they made beds for a week for their keep, Alice said they had fun doing it, but told how Avery was ready to kill a man who insulted her. Her comment on those years was: “I didn’t know what I was headed into!”

After a week at McLennan they got a chance to ride in the caboose as far as the Smoky river. There there were only a few rough shacks. The mule team and

Harry Brown were supposed to meet them there but Avery’s letter to Harry hadn’t gotten through. They stayed at the Smoky for two days, the team didn’t arrive, so when the work train went on to the end of the steel, two miles before Spirit River, they went with it. Now it was 60 below and wind and snow. Avery and George walked the two miles to see if the team was at Spirit River, but no team. It was 2 a.m., they got the help of a neighbor, George White, who was there with a hay rack. They hooked up the team and drove the two miles to the train where the girls and luggage were loaded onto the hay rack. It was fine until they reached a ravine, then going up the steep incline on the other side, girls, luggage and all slid off the flat deck into the snow bank. In the bitter cold, the horses fell down and had to be unhitched, and all the luggage had to be carried to the top of the ravine, at which job Avery froze his hands. They stayed at the English and Cauffman hotel in Spirit River, next day George walked on to Spitfire Lake near Grande Prairie. He was gone three days, and came back with a team. They made it to Spitfire Lake the next day, where they stayed at McLeans, where George and Sadie were to work. Avery went into Lake Saskatoon, walking, the next day and asked for his team. No team. But there he found the letter he had written Carl, which never had been sent on, telling him to bring the team out to meet them. Avery started out to walk to Beaverlodge and stopped at Jimmy Dixons, where Jimmy told him that Harry Brown had gone to Lake Saskatoon that morning with the mule team. Finally, Avery caught up with them by going back to Lake Saskatoon, where Matt Graham had stopped the team as Avery had instructed him to do if they should come along. He drove out for Alice at Spitfire Lake, and brought her to Mrs. McNaughts, four miles west of Beaverlodge, and there they stayed overnight. They were then eleven miles from home. McNaught’s had a big old log house with a tent over top for a roof, until they could get lumber, a better deal than the sod roof and dirt floor which Alice and Avery were to have for several years. Alice played the piano for McNaughts that evening, much to Betty McNaught’s delight.

They started out for the homestead the next morning, stopping at Jimmy Dixons on the way. On the homestead, the first thing Alice did was throw out the sourdough, much to Avery’s dismay. It was hanging from a nail in the rafters and she didn’t like the smell of it. The first time she whipped cream and it turned to butter, she threw it out too. She was so pleased with the eggs the hens laid, she gathered them one at a time as they were produced.

Two weeks after she arrived, the minister rode out from Beaverlodge on horseback to see if she would have church in her home now. For 14 years, once a month, this became a regular thing. Neighbors came, and many stayed for supper. Robert was born that same year in November. The year 1917 when people started coming in to homestead, they brought their blankets and as many as 14 slept overnight in the barn. 1918 Alice remarked as being a long hard winter, bitterly cold. The three oldest children were born on the homestead with Mrs. Waldo as midwife.

Avery and Alice had seven children, Robert, Eddy,

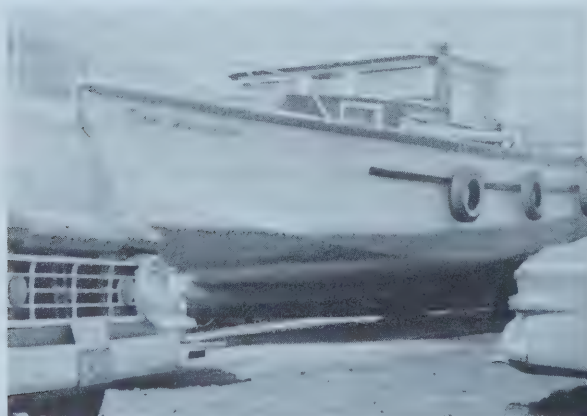


Arthur, then Irene and Marion, Carman and George. Carman died of pneumonia in 1932, was buried on the farm with many friends to console them. In 1923 Avery traded a horse for some foxes which an Indian had dug out of the hills. He kept them in the loft over the stable until spring and built a fox pen for them. He began raising mink in the 1930's and had a few on the farm, then moved to Lesser Slave Lake where he raised mink along with the whole family, until 1953 when they moved to White Rock, B.C. and continued in the mink business until 1959 when Avery passed away. Alice continued with the mink with the help of George until 1966, when she also passed away. Alice and Avery went back to an old-timers picnic at Halcourt just before Avery died, and it was a great thrill for them to reminisce with old friends and neighbors.

Irene's story does not mention that her mother, Alice Blackburn was English by birth. Her piano eventually arrived at Grande Prairie by train and when Avery was bringing it home his team ran away and the piano was badly shaken. However, a travelling piano tuner made the rounds next year and Alice and her piano were the background of church services in the Kenny home for 12 years. Other stories tell of Alice pumping the organ and singing in her rich voice, with a baby on her lap and a watchful eye on a hawk about to rob the chicken pen. Nor does it tell of Avery searching the furrows of a freshly ploughed field for his pair of dental pliers as an aching molar needed its attention.

#### CHRIS KLAUS

Chris Klaus and Ed Phelps went trapping into the mountains past Stony Lake about 1924 with three horses and a dog. Ed came home and Klaus was to come later, in the middle of August. His dog came home but no master. Ed thought he may have stopped at Homer Norman's but when Klaus did not arrive the next morning Ed was afraid something had happened. He wanted someone to go with him but everyone was busy harvesting so Ed took off alone on foot. He found Klaus on the fourth day face down in a little creek. Both shoes were off and the horses near by. He had had rope stirrups on a pack saddle and had been dragged some distance. Klaus evidently crawled to the creek for a drink. Ed came out and got the coroner and they buried him where he lay.



The "Trade Winds", a deep-sea fishing boat built by Murray Alde, 1965-68.

#### ARTHUR KNUTSON

Arthur (Slim) Knutson came from the United States to Saskatchewan in 1910 where he ran a draying business for a few years. Wanting to get away from the Prairies, he came to the Peace River country and after looking over different parts, decided to homestead along the Red Willow river. A year later he walked to Grande Prairie to take the train on his way to enlist in the army.

In 1919 Slim came back with a dream of raising cattle. However this wasn't too profitable at this time and it was a struggle to put up enough feed so he sold his cattle and turned to trapping.

One evening on the trap line Slim came home to find a bear had visited his cabin, breaking both windows. Mr. Bear ate all the sweets in the cupboard and threw the staples, such as flour and beans, out the window, knocked over the stove and squashed the stove pipes. While Slim was trying to clean up this mess he glanced up and saw the bear watching him through the broken window.

Slim hired out at stooking and threshing time. At one time he had a truck and hauled grain to town.

He even took on some cooking jobs. One summer he cooked for a crew of men who were working to build the road through to Prince George. All the cooking was done outside, including baking bread.

Later on he married Daisy Isley of Itipaw and built a new home at a different site on the Red Willow river. Slim did all the work on this house himself and they still reside here.

#### STAN LEONARD

In 1926 Stan Leonard left England and came to Oliver, B.C. A year later he came on to Wembley where he met Jim O'Connell and worked for him for a short time before hiring on with John Cook.

In 1932 Stan married Florence Cook. He owned and operated a store in Beaverlodge from 1934 to 1938. He joined the army in 1941 and was overseas until 1945, when he returned to Rio Grande to farm. They bought the Cook place and lived there until they moved to Beaverlodge.

Stan worked at the Research Station at Beaverlodge for six years and retired in 1972.

The Leonards have four children. Leslie married Madeline Belcourt and they live in Edmonton. Marion married Joe O'Connell and lives on the home place at Rio Grande. Darryl is in Beaverlodge and Dianne is married to Ken Eastman.

Marion was the first baby born in the Beaverlodge maternity hospital on the Old Town Hill and Darryl the first baby born in the new hospital.

#### THE LIBERTY FAMILY

In 1917 William Liberty came to our country looking for land. As his wife, Isabel was a niece of Mrs. Charles McNaught, he stayed with them for the short time he was here looking around. In the spring he and Isabel came with a carload of stock and equipment.

Bill's family farmed near Dresden, Ontario and was related to the Liberty Silk people of London, England. His wife's people, the Arthur Dickies also farmed near Dresden. Bill worked in the Ford plant in

Detroit for some years. He was a master stone mason and built open-hearth fireplaces for the plant.

The Libertys brought a good outfit with them, including Mrs. Liberty's favorite driving horse, cutter and rubber tired buggy. For a while they rented the Dave McCarter place. Eventually Bill found a homestead to his liking at the west of the Appleton district, with a beautiful view of the mountains. Here he built a comfortable house and a large barn such as he had always wanted.

However, as years went by he needed more land, so he bought the Paterson and other land in the Rio Grande area and sold the homestead. This time he built a large stone house.

Bill was a good neighbour to all those in need of assistance, whether running errands or building a new chimney. Like others of his time he followed the Ontario custom of stall feeding his fattening cattle almost to the extreme.

The Liberty's had two children, Norman and Ida. Norman farms the family land today. Ida went to high school in Grande Prairie and took a business course. She is now Mrs. John Walker and lives in Edmonton.



Threshing in the early 1930's, showing Bill Liberty, Ed Parker, and Kathleen Jordan.

### BIG BILL LOGAN

Bill Logan came into Rio Grande in the early 20's, a huge, quiet man. He spent his time with his herd of sheep and lived up by the Barr lease (St. Georges Ranch) in Goodfare.

### BILLY MASON

Billy Mason arrived before the 1920's and homesteaded west of Rio Grande. A gentle, tiny man, he was a great pianist. When range cattle would get into his crop he would lie in the field with an old umbrella and when the cattle came up he'd leap up and open the umbrella. It worked! They stampeded!

He passed away on his farm.

### JOHN McCORMACK

It has been very difficult to obtain much information about John McCormack. It is known that he went prospecting for gold in 1898 in the Klondike. He came through Edmonton, Athabasca and on to that vast North country. He worked for wages since he didn't make enough panning for gold.

He had a sister in Seattle, so when he tired of prospecting he went there. He purchased a brand-new suit of clothes, bought a gold watch and chain and fastened a huge gold nugget to the chain. When he

arrived in Seattle he became the worse for the liquor he consumed, became friendly with some strangers, and the next thing he remembered was waking up in the jail! The police had saved his life. The blackguards were about to rob him and slit his throat. The \$1,000.00 he had in cash, the watch and nugget were still with him.

He died alone in the barn on his farm. He was found by his good friend and neighbour, Albin Ringstrom.

### WESLEY McNEIL by Doris Smith

Wesley and Blanche McNeil both came from Ontario in their early childhood. Wes was from Irish descent and Blanche, from Scottish.

Mother and dad were married at Coronach, Saskatchewan in 1925 and farmed there until 1936 and located land in the Peace country. He drove up in the fall of 1936 when through some persuasion from brother Harry dad decided to try to locate land in the Peace country. He located a farm to rent from Jack Duke in the Halcourt district. In the spring of 1937 dad brought all livestock, some machinery and household effects on the freight train. Mother and four children, Ralph, Doris, Irene and Edgar followed by train.

We came from the dustbowl of Saskatchewan where if anything grew it either was blown out by dust storms or eaten by grasshoppers and worms. It amazed us as children to see trees growing everywhere and rivers flowing with fish in them. Mother wasn't too enthusiastic at first about log houses and being completely surrounded by at least six bachelors. Once she went to visit a Mr. Green but to her amazement she found he was a confirmed bachelor, too. However they were all very friendly and eventually most of them married.

Dad raised cattle, did custom threshing, grain grinding, sawed fire wood and also sawed lumber with his home-built mill. Mother kept very busy with the family, chores and picking wild berries which were so plentiful in this wonderful country. She never regretted making the move to the Peace country and would never return to the bald prairie.

Mother belonged to the ladies W.A. and we enjoyed concerts and social gatherings at Halcourt. We attended the United Church at Appleton school and Halcourt Hill. In the winter it was held in different homes such as Allison's, Andy Laings and other neighbours.

Dad bought our first pony, Old Smoky from Ben Dahl to ride the four miles to the Appleton school the first year. Next year we were able to go to the old log school in Halcourt.

In 1944 dad bought the Ed Duteau place in the Rio Grande district. Ralph, Irene and Edgar went to the Rio Grande and Caribou schools while I had to board out in Beaverlodge to get high school. I supervised school one year, went to Business College in Edmonton the following year and after working a year, married Joe Smith. We have four children and live on the Bill Phyllair place west of Beaverlodge.

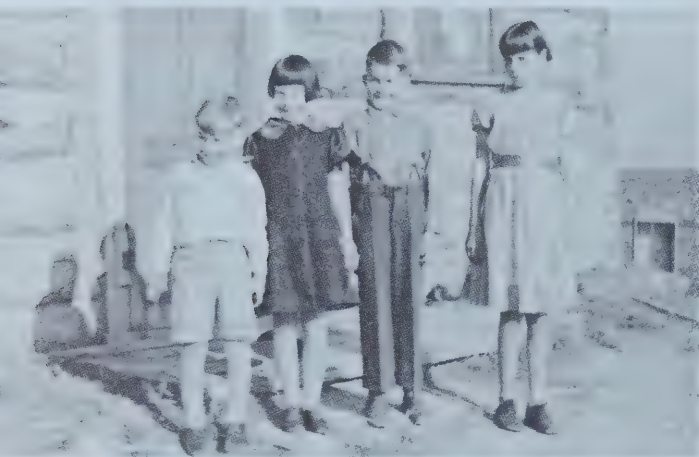
Ralph and Edgar stayed home to help farm. Ralph bought the home place and still resides there with his wife Louise, nee Carty, and their four children.

Irene completed her high school in Beaverlodge and took up nursing. She married Mike Stachera of





Wes, Blanche McNeil and son, Edgar, 1954.



Edgar, Irene, Ralph and Doris McNeil, 1939.

Saskatchewan and lives in Prince George, B.C. with their three children.

Edgar left home to work out and chose to be a bachelor.

Mother passed away in 1955 after she became ill with leukemia. Dad continued to farm until 1968 when ill health forced him to retire. He moved to the Hythe Pioneer Home in 1970.

#### MIKE MAN — by Pearl Cook

This brief title is all I ever heard Mike called. He is well remembered by oldtimers. He just seemed to drift in around 1917 and lived northwest of Rio Grande. I remember being told he was a big, wild-looking man. He had belonged to the Russian Cossack army at one time and at full speed on a horse he could shoot the eye out of a prairie chicken. Another true tale handed down and still talked about is how one night he caught a cub bear and walked miles through the bush to put the cub in bed with a bachelor neighbor. The yells of George White split the air for miles when he awoke to find what was in his bed!

Another time Mike dressed up in his very best (it consisted of many colors) and marched into my cousin's house and went straight up to her dad and announced that he wanted to marry her! His sole effects were a fairly large band of horses! She was terrified as most people were, of him and hid in the bedroom while her dad gingerly declined his offer of marriage.

#### THE FRANK MORRISON FAMILY — by Annabelle Funnell

There were seven of us in our family, Frank, Anna and the children, Jimmie, Florence, Betty, Frances and Annabelle.

Frank and Annie were born in Ontario, Frank in



Mrs. Anna Morrison and Edna Meraw, 1935.



Women's Institute meeting at Ramsey home, 1925. L-R: Nell Walker, Mrs. Morrison and baby Annabelle, Mrs. Chamberlain, Evelyn Bisbing, Mrs. Hill, Bertha Williams, two uncertain, Mrs. Leckie, Mrs. Sheppard, uncertain, Mrs. Barrett, Verna and Mrs. Ramsey. Front: Mrs. Bagley, Mable Duteau, Gladys Ellis, girl, Helen Walker.

Walkerton and Annie in Paisley. They were married there and started their move west, settling first in Nokomis, Saskatchewan where Jimmie was born. However, their intentions were to come to the Peace River country. They had read where you could own your own land for \$10.00 so in 1917 dad came to our home in Rio Grande with mom and baby Jim following in the spring of 1919. Their first home was a one room cabin 15' x 24'. As the family grew so did the cabin and four more children were added and born in the now five room cabin.

Mom mentioned that the year they came there was just one far-off light from a neighbor's house but within just a year and a half there were many.

I remember daddy mentioned one evening he and mom were out brushing at about sunset when a man coming into the country stopped to ask the time of day, dad's reply was "we don't worry about time here we just work from daylight to dark". Since they never saw him again they always thought he just went around the block and left again.

Mom and dad did many things to support their brood. They butchered and dad peddled meat, cut fence posts and sold them, hauled freight for the local store from Grande Prairie by team, worked for the government, building roads with his horses and a fresno and then farmed their 160 acres and always seemed to have a garden that filled the cellar in the house as well as a root cellar in the yard. Even the cabbages stayed solid and firm till spring and when it



would be opened to find they had always stored much more than they required for us.

Mom mentioned the most used article in the home those days was in her opinion the flour sacks. They would be bleached by boiling with gas in the water and then hung in the sun till perfectly white then some of them dyed and used for sheets, pillow cases (embroidered), dish cloths, underwear and mending horse blankets.

Water was hauled in barrels from Kenny's Crossing and each child in his turn had the chore of herding the cattle to the river each day. All five of us learned to ride on the same old horse, "Old Bessie". She was a patient old horse and undoubtedly made more trips to the river than any of us. This brings to mind another team we had, a driving team "Buck" and "Diamond". They were really a nice little pair but they had what we younger people in the family thought was a real fault when we started driving them. They came to a stand still everytime they met anyone. Undoubtedly their former masters had always had time for a wee chat with whomever they met and the team thought this was standard procedure. Our horses and cattle were a loved and very important part of our livelihood.

Mother did several things such as on more than one occasion prepared bodies for burial, helped with the sick using the common sense home remedies and when the one phone in the neighbourhood was installed in the Rio Grande store she used the guidance of Dr. Carlisle and what ever was at hand. She assisted many mothers with the birth of their babes, travelling in hay racks, sleighs, horse back and stone boat. I think I recall the last time and this time she went by car. The R.C.M.P. came to get her to help a lady in a tent at the Rio Grande bridge. I spent the afternoon in the fields with my father until mom came home to inform us a beautiful set of blue eyed twin girls had arrived.

Jimmie left in about 1932, with an English friend Jimmie Gibbons who had made his home with us for some time, to ride the rods and look for work which they found in the lumber camps of British Columbia. He married Kathryn Bilyk of Creston, B.C. Jim stayed in the lumber business and raised three lovely children at Cranbrook, B.C. where he still makes his home.

When the need for more education for the family came, dad built a small home in Beaverlodge where the three girls batched until Florence and Betty left to train as nurses at the Misericordia hospital in Edmonton in 1939 and 1940. Then mom and dad moved to Beaverlodge where mom cooked at the hospital and dad did odd jobs around town with his horses and worked on the farm with Frances in the summer.

Florence came back to nurse and was matron at the Beaverlodge hospital until leaving to specialize in surgery and hospital administration. She then joined the service again and was on active duty in Japan and Korea. After nursing in many military hospitals across Canada and compiling two books accepted by the Department of Health in the training of nurses for surgery she retired in Victoria where she makes her home today.

Betty nursed in Consort, Alberta and Creston, B.C. but always with a desire to go back to the farm which she did when she married Bill Nellis, fourth son of

Lester "Moose" and Stella Nellis of Bezanson, Alberta. Their two lovely girls are married to local people and the son Frank is living at home with his parents.

Frances married the eldest daughter of Mrs. Edith and the late John Smith of Mountain Trail. Although their three children were born in Beaverlodge they were raised for the most part in Eaglesham where Frances was an elevator agent. They now make their home in Mackenzie, B.C. Their two eldest children are also married and they have one boy, Bruce living at home and going to school.

Annabelle married locally, as well, to Tom Funnell, Jr., second son of Art Funnell of Halcourt. They were blessed with one son Gordon. They have lived all their lives in this area except for a short interlude in Edmonton. Gordon spent two years in Kitimat, B.C. but from choice they have moved back to the area and now live in Grande Prairie.

Although times were hard the first tragedy to hit our home was in September 1948 when our father passed away. Mother moved to Victoria in the 1960's where she made her home with Florence until her passing in February 1972.

It seems as I try to write this and look back I remember the hard times but if I try to single one out it always seems to have a funny ending so we have just been left with a mountain of happy memories. Maybe it's because we had parents that as they would sometimes reminisce I would hear them say repeatedly "there was always time to laugh" and "I wouldn't have missed any of it for the world".

#### **HANS NIELSON — By Pearl Cook**

Hans Nielson was a little, chubby, cheerful man from Denmark who came to the Hayfield district in 1931. To make ends meet he bartended in the Beaverlodge hotel for two years, and later worked as janitor in the Beaverlodge hospital. His cheery, friendly manner won him many friends.

He sold his farm and returned to Denmark in 1958. He came back in 1961 to renew old acquaintances and again in 1973. When I last saw him on his visit he was walking with the aid of a cane. But some of the youngsters now grown remember how he'd entertain them by "walking down stairs" to his cellar on his hands.

#### **THE DAVID NIXON STORY — By Gladys Moore**

The spring of 1916, how long ago that seems now. All winter long we children listened to our dad's talk of The Peace River country, the land of milk and honey, in our home near Blaine, Washington, on a small fruit farm at Boundary Hill.

Finally the David Ramsay family and the David Nixon family loaded their belongings, horses, cow, burro, household effects, etc. in a freight boxcar. My step-father and brother Bert came with the car to care for the animals. The rest came tourist on the passenger train. Our mothers packed lunch boxes to last the trip. Our family included Bert, Joe and myself, Gladys, children of my mother's first marriage to Mr. Rath. After our father's death, mother married David Nixon and then a sister, Olive was born. Later in Clairmont a brother, Mervin was



born. To all us kids the trip was a real adventure, but I don't think our mothers were so enthusiastic leaving home for the "unknown".

However we arrived at Grande Prairie April 16th, 1916 at midnight on a very dark night. You couldn't see your hand before your face but lanterns lit the way from the station to the Immigration Hall, a new structure that had curtains on the bedrooms for doors. Later we went to a hotel until homes were built in Clairmont.

I remember the crocuses were in bloom and we thought they were so pretty, even though we had left the roses blooming in Blaine. Everything seemed wonderful to us, I was nine years old at that time.

We settled in Clairmont for about two years but during that time our fathers went searching for homesteads and back and forth building homes to take their families to live in. I'm sure there must have been lots of land much closer but they finally filed 20 miles south west of Beaverlodge in now the Rio Grande district. Ours was the farm now owned by Albert Holtz, on which the log house my father built and we lived in still stands. We met many wonderful people, everyone was your friend in those days. We all had plenty of hardships but didn't seem to mind them, all had the real pioneer spirit.

My stepfather was stricken with a heart attack while working on the farm a few years later, the farm was sold to the Holtz and my mother moved back to Clairmont where she lived till she passed away.

One instance to do with the trip up here, I'll never forget. We had a family pet cat called "Maggie". She was a Manx Isle bobtail which we had brought originally from Escondido, California. We all thought the world of her and just couldn't have left her behind. However at McLennan the conductor, who was very superstitious found out there was a cat on board and because the train had been going off the tracks so many times he was sure it was the cat that was causing so much bad luck. So he insisted Maggie be put off and vowed the train wouldn't move till she was. So much to my stepfather's dread of the sorrow it would cause us we were forced to comply and there were kittens that had to be disposed of as well. When we heard the freight pull in at Grande Prairie we rushed down but, alas, no Maggie and there was much sadness especially for me. I cried my eyes out. However, about three days later while the car was being unloaded I thought I heard a cat meowing, and hopefully called her name. From under one of the cars out came the cat. She had ridden somewhere on the train, perhaps on the bumper, all the way from McLennan. My stepfather didn't fail to tell the conductor. Incidentally she lived to the ripe old age of 17 years and raised many kittens.

Another incident occurred when our one team of horses wandered away before we had fences. We didn't have a well in the winter of 1918, the year of the "Spanish Influenza" epidemic, and it was a mild winter with scarcely any snow. No horses, no water, as we had been hauling water from Schill's, a close neighbour. My stepfather hitched our cow to a stoneboat; she was frantic with fright and over a haystack she went. After a while she got over her pan-

ic and hauled a wooden churn of water half a mile there and back. If you try, there is always a way. We finally got the horses back in the spring; they had wandered as far as Goodfare, but we had put an ad in the Grande Prairie paper offering a \$10.00 reward. People were helpful and honest and we had wonderful neighbours, always ready to help.

At first we got our mail at Halcourt, the closest post office till one started at Rio Grande. Things were getting better all the time. Our fathers made no mis-



The Nixon cat that was put off the train at McLennan.

take in following their dreams. Peace River is the greatest and our corner no exception, as I continued to find out when in later years I moved back to the district after my marriage to Edgar Ellis and lived on the farm just south of the Rio Grande bridge. We had two sons, Edgar Jr. (Manny) and Gordon. However when my husband's health failed, we gave up the farm and moved to Victoria in 1935, where he passed away soon after. When my sons were grown up, I married Logan Moore and live in Victoria now, as does my sister Olive Weigand. Mervin still lives in Watino, Alberta as did my brother Joe till he passed away several years ago. He had been a cripple from a boy of ten years. Bert returned to California where he still lives.

#### THE DENNIS O'CONNELL STORY

Dennis O'Connell and wife, the former Mary Ann McCarthy, were booked to sail on the ill-fated "Titanic" from England to Canada in April 1912. However because of a postponement of their wedding they missed the boat and had to sail later.

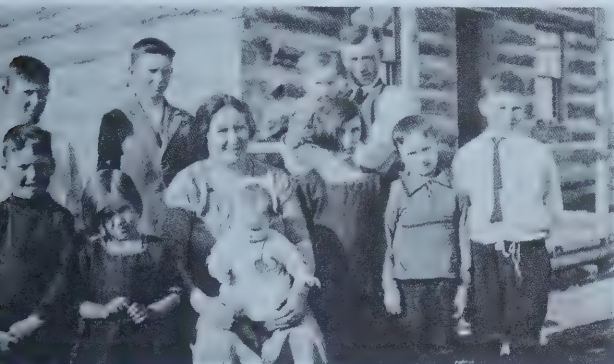
They lived in Hartley, Manitoba for two years, where two sons, Jack and Michael were born.

In May 1914 they began their long journey to Rio Grande over the Edson Trail travelling by train to Edson. Here, Dennis left Mrs. O'Connell for awhile while he went ahead to see about arrangements for the journey north.

Dennis and his brother John returned to Edson for the family and they left on August 3, 1914. The journey was being made by oxen and wagon; due to the road conditions they only made 8 miles the first day. The next day saw 10 miles more on their journey. The next day they came to muskegs and 25 miles of rough corduroy road, the heat was intense — 80 and 90 above, and poor Mrs. O'Connell with the high English but-



toned boots was forced to walk and carry the baby — three weeks old in her arms as the severe jolting made him ill. Ten days on the road and baby “Micky” became very ill and they were forced to stop at what was called “Half Way River”. More muskegs were to be contended with around Moose Creek and down went the wagons to the axles. The men would unload the wagons, pull them out and reload. That gave Mrs. Den a chance to catch up, as she would get behind walking, and terrified at every step — just out of London as you can imagine. The second week they landed at Baptiste River to find it in flood, so they swam the oxen over and Mrs. Den and babies were sent across in a rough raft. Mr. Den’s mother had accompanied them from England, so she bravely stayed with the wagon fording the river. In the middle of it the top boards of the wagon came off and away floated Mrs. Den’s trunks with her treasures, also her old rocking chair; away also went her only coat.



Dennis O'Connell family, 1926.

The next stop was the old Mission at Sturgeon Lake where they thankfully could get supplies and rest for two days, then on to the Hudson Bay store — run by Tom Kerr. There Mrs. Den was given a pair of moccasins for her sore weary feet. She said “that did it! fallen arches ever since.” Finally they came to Moody’s Crossing and then two more long days and they arrived at Grande Prairie. The town then only consisted of a few shacks, and the Billy Salmon Hotel. August 21 was the date the O’Connells made Grande Prairie and 90 degrees above.

Their homestead site at Rio Grande was the next stop. There Dennis, twins Margaret and Frank, Pat, Noreen and Joe were born. They spent many a long, lean year struggling on the farm but with steady going, they finally built a new modern home (which still stands).

Tragedy struck in July 1931 when Jack, the oldest boy was drowned while swimming in the Red Willow river. Micky married Elsie Eastman and they have three daughters, Margaret, Carol and Marjorie, and two sons Terry and Wayne. Micky still farms at Rio Grande. Denny lives in Kamloops, B.C. Margaret is now Sister Mary Dennis and is a nurse in the Order of Sisters of Providence. Frank married Hazel Wenzel and they farm south west of Beaverlodge. They have six children, Jim, Jerry, Corrine, Leslie, Donald and Shannon. Pat and wife Julie have a family of seven,

Larry, Kim, Lorraine, Ellen, Mary Ann, Michael and Timothy. They reside in Kelowna, B.C. Noreen married Ross Ford of Bezanson (now deceased) and their children are Francis, Dennis, Ken, Helen and Douglas. Tim is a bachelor and still lives alone on the old homestead. Joe married Marion Leonard, they have six children, Lyle, Jack, Laurie, Kelly, Daniel and Maureen. They farm in Rio Grande. Den O’Connell will be remembered for his active years on the County as councillor. He passed away March 1, 1952 at the age of 77 and Mary Ann on June 6, 1969 at age 82 years.

#### JAMES O’CONNELL

Jim O’Connell was born in 1891, in Sussex, England. He came to Canada in 1912 and worked for a farmer in Manitoba for two years. Then he joined his two brothers, Jack and Dennis and came west by railroad to Edmonton, then by wagon over the Edson Trail. They herded their cattle. One cow calved on the way so they had to haul the calf and milk the cow twice a day.

After many weeks of travel they arrived in the Rio Grande district where Jim filed on SW 6-71-11 in 1914. Jim and Dennis worked with Jack, who had rented land from McNaughts. They picked rocks and roots and had 50 acres of wheat sown by the end of March that year.

Jim’s mother and sister, Mary lived with him until Mary married Frank Schill in 1915. Mrs. O’Connell passed away, at home in 1917.

The first winter was an open one. The horses grazed all winter and they thought they had moved to a wonderful country.

For the first three winters that Jim, Jack and Dennis lived here, Jack and Dennis went to Edson to haul machinery and supplies. It took about six weeks to make the trip with oxen and horses.

The first 15 acres that Jim broke yielded 62 bushels to the acre of wheat. This land and the rest of the homestead was cleared by axe and grub hoe and broken with horses as was all other land in the area at that time.

Jim married Irene Cook, November 23, 1921. Irene’s claim to fame was that she was the first white woman to be married in the first Catholic church at Rio Grande. Father Serand officiated.

On one occasion Jim and Jack O’Connell had a nice camp fire and tea going in the tamarac swamp. Bill Liberty and Percy Hunkin pulled in to cut their load of posts. They were greeted by Jim, “Come on over! We’re making a picnic of this job!” This is typical of Jim’s attitude towards life.

In 1924 Jim worked on the railroad from Grande Prairie to Wembley. He ploughed the first furrow for the railroad into Wembley and mistakenly ploughed too far. He recalls how he “caught hell” over it. During that summer his wife stayed at a neighbor’s house (Stevenson’s) as there was no water on their home place.

Once a fire started to the west of where Irene was living. A neighbor, Mrs. Robinson came up and told her that it was spreading and Irene should pack everything and have the two little girls, Mavis and Eileen ready so that if the fire got too close she was to



go to a small lake nearby. Thankfully, the fire stopped about ¼ mile from the house. In the meantime, her father, John Cook came to see how close the fire was and Irene insisted that he stay until she felt safer.

The schoolhouse was the centre of community activities in those days. At one of the many dances, Jim and two of his friends thought that the police had a bottle hidden. They went looking and found it. The "cache" was a bottle of cherry whiskey, with cherries floating in it. After each one liberally sampled the contents of the bottle, they filled it with some of their moonshine and returned it to its hiding place.

Jim was one of the participants in the first and many succeeding plays that were held in the Rio Grande Hall.

Jim and Irene had six children. Mavis married Walter Gerry and they live in Chetwynd, B.C. Eileen married Frank Gaunt and they live in Parksville, B.C. Clayton married Arlene Comeau of Grovedale. Glenn married Audrey Dowd and they live on the homestead. John married Isabelle Roy of Calgary where they now live. Joan married Lawrence Martineau of Sexsmith and they live in Grande Prairie.

Jim passed away July 26, 1957 and was buried in the Rio Grande cemetery. He will be remembered for his beautiful Irish brogue and sense of humor as he sang at all social events. One St. Patrick's night, he was in high spirits and was prevailed upon to sing "My Wild Irish Rose," and Rudolph Jacobs had also been partying and accompanied him on the piano with "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling."

#### JOHN O'CONNELL

John O'Connell, born May 10, 1883 and raised on a farm in Sussex, England sailed from England in the summer of 1912 along with his mother, sisters Margaret and Mary and one brother James. Their first stop was at Hartley, Manitoba. It was here they met up with his brother Dennis and his wife, who had sailed in the spring of that year. They stayed in Manitoba until May, 1914 when they shipped all their belongings to Edson and from there started their long trek over the Edson Trail to the Rio Grande area.

Many of their belongings had to be unloaded and cached by the wayside and they had to go back for them at a later date. "Never was anything ever stolen", indicating the honesty of the majority of our pioneers.

A year later John sent for Bridget Grant, born in Booley Bay, County Wexford, Ireland. She had been working in London, England when they met. They were married May 10, 1915 in Grande Prairie by Father Josse.

John O'Connell filed on the S.E. 1-71-12-W6 and rented land from Sam McNaught from 1915 to 1918. When the McNaughts arrived back from the east John rented land from Charlie Kreuze.

The mother, Mary O'Connell lived with the youngest son, James who was not yet married. She passed away in 1917 and was buried in the old Mission cemetery at Grande Prairie.

There were three children from this marriage. Mary worked for many years in the local store and then went to Grande Prairie and worked for P. V.



John O'Connell beside his first log house.

Croken and Bird's General Store. She is married to Alec G. Field and living in Grande Prairie. They have four children.

Nellie worked in the Royal Bank in Spirit River for ten years. Their father suffered a stroke on May 10, 1950 which left him an invalid and Nellie came home to help care for him. When he passed away May 10, 1957 she went to work for a finance company in Grande Prairie until July 1, 1971 when she returned home again to give a helping hand to her mother, who is now 87 years.

Neil carried on with the farming when John had his stroke. Nellie, Neil and their mother still live on the original homestead.

#### DANE PANNELL

I came to the Peace River country after being discharged from the R.C.A.F. I had heard of the Peace from some of the fellows I had met and I decided this is where I wanted to go. I had thought the Peace River country would be about the size of Grande Prairie district. I've been here all this time and haven't seen it all yet.

I left Lloydminster for Hythe with a 1928 Chrysler Coupe car with just four tires and tubes. Ingles Patterson of Hythe used to stay at my folks place when he lived down south so my folks said, "Why not go and start from there?" I arrived in Hythe August 4, 1946 and have been in this country ever since.

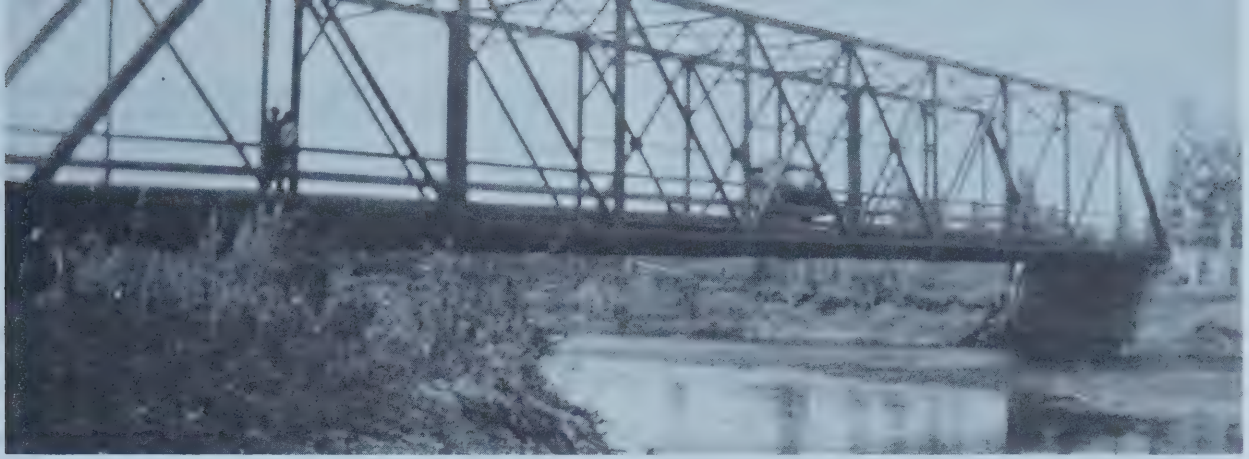
The one incident that comes to mind is when I stayed alone the early part of the winter at Pattersons' lease. Ingles told me about the time Jimmy McCelin was staying at the lease and had killed a wolf in the porch of the house with an axe. Well, being a young fellow from the prairie, I had never seen anything bigger than a coyote. That story was bad enough but the first time I heard the wolves that just about finished it right there. To make matters worse I had seen tracks of wolves in the pasture near the buildings as big as bread and butter plates.

In June 1962 I pulled up stakes from Hythe and moved to the Rio Grande area. After all these years I don't know where else I would rather live.

#### HENRY PATTERSON

Henry Patterson, better known as "Pat", first homesteaded at Lake Saskatoon in 1907. He is believed to have been the first settler in the Beaverlodge Valley. He had squatter's rights on land near the town of Beaverlodge. Later he drifted into the Rio Grande





The Bridge. "Much better than fording the river."

area and ended up in first one, then another old abandoned cabin.

He was a little old, quiet, bewhiskered man whom you seldom saw until he wandered in to a store to buy a few pounds of butter or some eggs. His old friends will remember him with a little pack on his back. At his heels followed a faithful old Airedale dog, which, with no disrespect to Pat, seemed to resemble his master. His shaggy face and twinkling brown eyes peered out in a friendly manner.

In 1952, Pat, aged 84 became the object of a two months' search by a posse headed by the Beaverlodge detachment of the R.C.M.P. He failed to show up after starting out to make his way afoot from Goodfare to Rio Grande. Planning to visit his old friend Nathan B. Sechrist, Pat then living in Wembley, was thought to have caught a ride from Wembley, where he was living, to Goodfare. Then he attempted to retrace a remembered trail through swamps, timber and hills to the Sechrist place. His body was found months later where he had fallen after becoming lost or exhausted.

#### ED PHILLIPS

Ed Phillips settled west of Rio Grande in 1916. He was and will be remembered for his "Community Spirits." In those days medicine was hard to come by for animals and one day a very valuable horse was stricken. The owner madly dashed up to Ed's, and his home-made medicine cured the horse. The owner of the horse and a friend sampled the remains and "came to" the next day.

Ed spent his remaining days on his farm.

#### LARS AND PETE QUVITTEM — by Pearl Cook

This book would not be complete if we left out the Quvittens, specially "Lars". He homesteaded east and north of Rio Grande in the early 20's. A tall, raw boned Scandinavian, he was a real "ladies' man", and no school house dance was complete without him. He looked after the boiler of coffee and it was his delight to hook up his four-up of spirited horses to a big grain box and with sleigh bells ringing make the rounds and pick up anyone wishing to go to a dance. It might be 50 below but old Lars would sit up on the seat in his big buffalo coat and get everyone home safely. I can still hear him hollering to his horses, "Come on boys, come on girls!", till they fairly flew. He never missed a

dance and kept up a running fire of conversation with his partner. Sometimes his false teeth would get dislocated and he'd spit with every word.

In those days many a pioneer made his own "home brew" and somehow the law got wise to Lars and raided his shack. To Lars delight the search was fruitless; Lars told his friends in his broken English how "I fool 'em, I bury it in my manurey pile".

There isn't too much to say about his brother Pete who homesteaded close to Lars. A stern close-mouthed Scandinavian, we remember him as always standing by the road to town, which went by his house to catch a ride to town. He had an old pipe that must have come with the Ark — strong — you'd never believe it if you hadn't had the honor of giving Pete a lift. In cold weather he wore an old buffalo fur coat, so he'd squeeze in, out would come the pipe and you drove like hell to town to dispose of Pete and pipe. But he was a well educated, clever man, and passed on in the 40's or 50's. Another not to be forgotten character of the past.

#### DAVID RAMSAY — by Evelyn Bisbing

Picture two families boarding the train in Blaine, Washington in April 1916. The roses were blooming and the mothers were very reluctant to leave their comfortable homes to go to, they knew not what only that the destination was the Peace River country which their husbands had been reading so much about. Yes, one of the families was our own David and Letita Ramsay and daughters, Viola 13 years, Verna 11, and Evelyn, six. The other family was the David Nixons. I'll never forget when we got to McLennan where there was still a lot of snow on the ground and a blizzard raging. Mother and Mrs. Nixon both broke down and cried and kept repeating, "What have you brought us to?" It was all very frightening to me.

Nevertheless we were more fortunate than those who came earlier by team and wagon or sleigh over the Edson Trail but I wonder if the train wasn't just about as rough. We travelled on the first passenger train to cross the Smoky bridge. The train slowed almost to a stop and eased slowly over it. To me as a child, train sick all the way I thought the trip would never end. But it did, at Grande Prairie. We had spent a few days there until our two-room shack in Clairmont was finished temporarily.

It so happened on my sister Verna's 12th birthday



we girls decided to go for a walk up a trail now called the Clairmont road. The three of us and Gladys and Olive Nixon had walked maybe a mile when we spotted a horse and rider coming toward us, cowboy hat and all, a real desperado, or so we imagined so into the bush we ran like a bunch of scared rabbits. We came to a slough but never stopped, splashing through water to our knees. Finally we came out at the railroad tracks and followed them back to town but stood around on some hot coals the train had left to dry our shoes. We didn't tell our mothers for a while.

Dad built the first blacksmith shop in Clairmont and spent two years at his trade there, a necessity of making a few dollars to start homesteading. Dad filed on his homestead at Rio Grande in 1917, the N.E. quarter of 25-70-12-6 and in the spring of 1918 we moved out to start clearing, breaking and working the land. Our garden was frozen the first year but later we usually had a good garden, a big part of our living along with cows and chickens. Mother's project was raising turkeys for a few extra dollars, also making butter for sale.

Rio Grande for the first time heard the ring of an anvil under the heavy hammer wielded by my father's smithy hands. He was an expert at shoeing horses and had the record of never having to give up on any Bronco. He could make a plow-share look like new by welding points on it and could make anything he set his mind to, from hinges to the whole iron gate. The first summer there was no time to build a shop. The forge, blower and anvil were set up in the yard, rather a fair weather deal but there was plenty of other work to keep us all busy. We girls were often called on to lend him a hand holding one part of something to be welded or to turn the blower. After logs were cut, hauled home and a shop built there were no more such incidents.

During the first year we were on the homestead, dad spent 178 days on the trail with a team. What was he doing? Hauling lumber for a house from the Buffalo Lakes mill and bringing farm machinery from Clairmont. He had traded our home in Blaine for an outfit of farm implements and horses. Then there was the job getting logs from far back in the bush for barns and the shop. We carried water from the river a half mile away and up a steep hill.

To mother and us girls it was pretty scary staying alone. We slept in a tent the first winter. We had an old

slow-poke pony, hard to catch and not much good when you did get him, one cow and her calf and the only fence was just half way around a 10-acre field of oats. There was no herd law then and large herds of cattle could wander in any time. At 4 a.m. one particular morning while dad was away we awakened to hear many tramping feet and bawling all over the place. Cattle were in the grain field that was already in stooks, eating them and tearing them down. They had broken through the fence into the feed corral and were gorging themselves on a stack of hay that dad had cut with a scythe. The girls had raked it up in small piles till it was dry and if it rained it had to be turned. Now, a good many days work was being destroyed in a few minutes by perhaps a 100 head of cattle. Our task was to round them up and drive them out, on foot, at the same time separating our own to keep them home and all the while hoping that the wild herd wouldn't decide to charge us. We hollered our loudest and luckily for us it worked.

We had the first frame house in the district. It was large so that we always had room for the family and for visitors. Mother served many free meals to dad's shop customers as we always had a good garden, chickens and a milk cow. The house was cold in winter and the girls soon learned that by placing the head of the bed against the window and draping it with a blanket the draft would be reduced.

It was hard for dad to keep up with farming and his blacksmith work but that is where I came in on many occasions, driving the horses to keep the machinery going on the land. I loved horses and working with them.

I was nine past before they built the little Rio Grande school house with the barrel-type stove in the middle of the floor and this building was the general meeting place for several years. It was used for school meetings, Christmas concerts, church when a preacher would come out and dance parties where the whole family went together and joined in till the wee small hours. Even the babies weren't left home. One had to watch out that you didn't sit on one lying under a coat on a bench. We did have some jolly times and it was just like one big happy family getting together where all the news and views were exchanged. Frank Stevenson played the violin and Earl Jones the banjo. Later I attended the first high school on the Old Town hill of Beaverlodge for grade nine.

There were literary meetings at Halcourt which we went to once in awhile. One big highlight was when we went to Lower Beaverlodge to a double wedding of good friends, on April 23, 1919. They were Homer Jaque and Louise Harris — Pauline Jaque and Gordon Sherk, I still have the picture.

We had to be self sufficient as possible so I started cutting my dad's hair but before we realized it there were four or five neighbors coming to get free hair cuts too. This included an old-timer, David Shesley, our neighbor on the west. His hair was thick and he believed in letting it get plenty long so kept me busy for awhile. He hauled the mail for many years from Beaverlodge.

Later years when the Rio Grande hall was built



Mr. and Mrs. Dave Ramsey, 1920.



different groups formed orchestras and we were in one. My sister Verna played the piano, I took her place a few times but mostly I was on the drums. Others on the violin, banjo and sometimes a saxophone. We played at Rio Grande, Halcourt, Beaverlodge and once at Scenic Heights. We were fortunate to have a piano at home and had many practices and sing songs there.

We helped to organize a basketball team and played on it. We even had red and white uniforms. Viola, the eldest was married Dec. 5, 1922 to Alex McIntosh, joint owner of the first Rio Grande store. Shortly afterwards they left for Lac Du Bonnet, Manitoba where they still have their home but spend their winters in Florida.

Verna married Harry Silverton. They went to Toronto, came back to Dawson Creek for five years to work on the Peace River bridge during the building of the Alaska Highway, then returned to Toronto.

Evelyn married August Bisbing. We went to Albright to live on the farm there and later returned to Rio Grande until 1944 when we moved to Beaverlodge to be near school. Mom and dad retired from the farm in March, 1937 and moved to Beaverlodge where they spent their remaining years. Dad Ramsay passed away in 1954. Four years later mother went to join him.

Perhaps we weren't here quite long enough to be in the Old Timers' Association but we did our share of pioneering. Many blacksmith bills remain unpaid but perhaps that was part of dad's contribution to the district.

My parents came from Huron County. Dad's father was from the Isle of Man and mother was of Irish descent. They had a small farm near Blaine, Washington and their closest neighbor was Walter Hill, who was also a close neighbor at Rio Grande.

## RIO GRANDE

Rio Grande is a westward extension of the Halcourt district. For many years it was served by two roads leading westward, then merging and swinging south across the Red Willow river. With the coming of the O'Connells, the Cooks and other families a Roman Catholic Church localized the center of the community and a store and a hall were built, to make it an active and progressive settlement. The school was built about two miles away and on occasion it was used for concerts and dances.

The name is intriguing in that there is little there to suggest the Rio Grande river of the United States — Mexico boundary, save that the Red Willow river is nearby. But settlements and post offices must be named and when the early settlers, Min and Clay Stumpt returned from a trip to the United States they suggested the name Rio Grande for the community and it was accepted.

Dr. Carlisle's Baby Clinic, 1923.



The Store, 1928.

## THE RIO GRANDE C. W. L.

In the early autumn of 1939, the ladies of St. Patrick's Church of Rio Grande were invited by Father McGuire, C.S.S.R. to a meeting to be held at the home of Mrs. M. A. Barrett. Mrs. Agnes Hay, the National President of the Catholic Women's League had come with Father McGuire to organize a subdivision of the C.W.L.

Since 1918 when the first parish church was opened the women had been organized as an Altar Society and now welcomed the opportunity to become a part of the national organization. Thus, the meeting organized subdivision No. 899 of the Catholic Women's League with Mrs. James O'Connell as the first president and Mrs. S. J. Leonard as the secretary.

A charter was applied for and in due time it arrived, carrying the seal of the C.W.L. and the date, October 27, 1939. It was duly signed by Agnes Hay, national president and Isobel Hutton, honorary secretary.

Only three of our members are with us today. Some have been called to their reward while others, including our first president and our first secretary are making their homes elsewhere. Today we have 15 members, mostly active when roads and weather permit.

And so the C.W.L. carries on in its small way, for God, Home and Country and may it ever expand.

## RIO GRANDE HALL AND ST. PATRICK'S PLAYS — By Pearl Cook

The Rio Grande Hall was built in 1928. Joe Sims took the contract for \$300. It is held as the Rio Grande Community Association. In those years it ran on membership of \$1.00 per member per year.

The first board of directors was formed April 2, 1929. They were Campbell Leckie, Fred McCardle, Ed Moore, Dan O'Connell and Wayne Chamberlain.

The Hall has continued to function through all these years. At one time the hardwood floor was considered the best dance floor in the north. It has served for all Rodeo and Sports dances and for many a happy couple their wedding dance. If those old walls could only talk!

I think the high light of all is the 17th of March play, which started 53 years ago at the little Caribou school house. Mrs. Paul Kenny directed the first play. Then they held the plays at the Rio Grande school. They have become a tradition and only one year has been missed in all those years. We have gone through many directors, some now at rest, but I'm sure when St. Pat's night rolls around they must be looking down!

I know where of I speak as at the age of about 13 I





St. Patrick's and Rectory.



The first church, 1920.

was called into them. I know the fun and hardship the local people went through to make them possible. We used to practise at houses, sometimes riding horseback for miles. I have seen the snow so deep that the only way possible to get to play practise was on foot and some of our cast would walk four or five miles to get there.

I remember one 17th of March when a blizzard had hit and the main road from the river to the Hall was blocked. It did not stop our play? — no! Alphonse Cook got on his "Cat" and for hours drove up and down the road so the "Show might go on"! — and it did. We always picked on comedies and the laughter that rang to the roof was our reward. They would be packed to the doors standing — but they came.

I must tell you of one night we had one of our famous neighbours in the play. In those days Government liquor was hard come by, so he'd made some Native juice in order to keep his spirits up and he put the "Micky" in his hip pocket. On stage he charged and as was in the part he had to fall and fall he did. There was a loud smash and a dark stain spread over the seat of his pants. The crowd went wild! But more so when he forgot his lines and said "Oh hell, that's not right, I'll start over!"

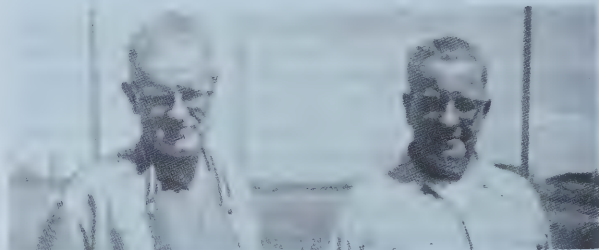
Oh, they were precious times and always after play practise we could depend on a bountiful lunch served



Opening of All Saints' Anglican Church at Rio Grande, 1929 with Rev. Law and Bishop Robbins.



The Rio Grande Hall, 1928.



Father Murray and Father Murphy, 1962.

The dedication of St. Patrick Church by Bishop Grouard, 1929.



by our local ladies. There even was a time when one of our dear pioneers died suddenly. Did we cancel the play? We didn't dare for Dan O'Connell, who was in the first St. Patrick's play would have haunted us if we failed him. So the show went on.

I missed taking part in only one play in all these years. They always had to have a Jackass, so I helped them out. Now a younger but just as keen and capable group have taken over and they carry on the traditional play for March 17. I believe this is the only place in the Peace River country can proudly boast of such a tradition.

### ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH

On Saturday, June 1, 1918 we arrived in Grande Prairie and because I had never been west before, I wondered just what I'd find. I could see the places of business on main street but wondered about a Catholic church as I could see neither cross nor steeple anywhere.

I was told we would find the Catholic church across Bear Creek on the homestead taken by the church in the beginning of Grande Prairie. So the next morning, Sunday we were assisting at Mass in the log church on what was known as the Catholic Mission. After Mass we were introduced to Father La Treiste, O.M.I. and Father Josse, O.M.I. who were in charge of the Mission.

And from there we left for Rio Grande where, coming along the last mile we saw the little log church. It was built during the winter of 1917-18 through the joint efforts of the men of the parish and one could not help thinking "be it ever so humble there's no place like home" since surely to all Catholics the church is home.

In June, 1918 Bishop Grouard accompanied by his priest companion and our pastor, Father Wagner came to bless the church. After that impressive ceremony the first Mass in the new church was celebrated by Bishop Grouard in the presence of the entire white congregation, also many Indians and Metis the beloved people of Bishop Grouard because of his many, many years of devoted work amongst them.

After moving amongst and greeting all who were present Bishop Grouard and the congregation enjoyed a generous picnic lunch and all relaxed and visited until it was time for afternoon Benediction. But before Benediction the Bishop baptized the twin son and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis O'Connell, who were born just before this momentous day. Thus they were the first children to be baptized in the new church.

For a time Father Wagner continued on as our pastor. He was followed by Father Rheau, with Father Deacon, pastor at Pouce Coupe filling in occasionally. Then came Father Serand, our pastor in 1929 at the time our second and larger church was built.

Until this time the priests of the Order of Mary Immaculate had been ministering to us but in 1930 Father Dufresne, as secular priest was sent to us and was the first and only resident priest in Rio Grande. For a time he was our pastor and when he left the parish was taken over early in 1935 by the Redemptorist Fathers, and our first Redemptorist pastor was Father Lane. Then followed a succession of Redemp-

torist pastors, Father Redmond, Father Joe O'Connell, Father Doyle, with Father Bob O'Donnell filling in at intervals, Father Gregory Murphy, Father Campbell, Father Blanchard. Father T. P. Murphy built our present lovely church and the dormitory. Fifty-six years from that memorable day in June 1918, we have our generous and helpful pastor, Father F. Skaluba.

During the first 21 years of our Parish, the ladies of the church were organized and carried on their work as the Altar Society, caring for the church, supplying and caring for the linens, flowers, candles etc., holding many and varied entertainments to raise the necessary funds to do the work.

### RIO GRANDE SCHOOL HISTORY

By 1918 the time for a school in Rio Grande district had become desperately apparent. Each year new settlers were arriving with children of school age. Some of the youngsters already in the district were coming of age. A site was donated by Walter Hill on his quarter, SE 5-71-11 with the provision that the land could be used as long as the school was in operation.

In the winter of 1918 the Rio Grande neighbours formed a bee, went to the bush and got out logs. That winter they built the one-roomed building that served the community for over 30 years.

The first trustees were Albert Hill, Dennis O'Connell and Avery Kenny. Rio Grande is now a predominantly Catholic settlement but in those early days the Orangeman outnumbered the Catholics and some really exciting events took place at the annual school meetings. One man, who was a child at the time recalls the factions being so strong willed that the children segregated themselves at lunch time — the Catholics on one side of the school — the Protestants on the other. But like true children they didn't let this interfere with their fun and games. Every school meeting was good for a couple of weeks of lively discussion before and after.

Lawrence Cage, one of the first students was asked to recall the first students who attended the Rio Grande school — Dorothy Cunningham, Albert Hill, Frank, Annie, Rand and Lawrence Cage, the Ramsey sisters, Verna and Evelyn, Warrington Pender, Regina Carter, Florence Cook, Henry Hatton, Jackie O'Connell and some Indian boys.

The first teacher, May Embrie opened the school in the spring of 1918. She lived alone in a little log shack below the school. She later married Frank Carbett, making one less bachelor in the district.

The problem of procuring a teacher wasn't always easy. Evelyn Bisbing remembers one time when a girl who came as far as Wembley and when she found she still had to go 30 miles further by team, she climbed back on the train and went home. The second teacher who came was the sister of Ewen MacDonnell, the local storekeeper. Then came Jessie Reddic in 1921. In 1922 Nora Shook is remembered for her "grammar box." Evelyn recalls that she was quite upset by the misuse one spiteful girl made of the box to get Evelyn into trouble. Edna Fraser came all the way from Chatham, New Brunswick and was followed by Belle Brocky, Jean McGillvary, Gladys Jamieson who later





The first school, 1920.

married C. A. Mills, Cliff Lee, Avery Kenny and Frank Bullis who carried on for some say eight years. Then some local young people — Lawrence Ozust, Peggy Martin, Margaret Gould, Mrs. Stella Holtz and Dorothy Edgerton kept the school open. The school was closed for a couple of years and then Mrs. Roger Ventress taught until bussing closed the doors for good.

One young inexperienced teacher had to strap a little boy who was a discipline problem — “a real terror” — and after the ordeal she went home and fainted twice because she was so upset.

In the first few years the janitor work was done by the older children. After school while the girls swept the floor and dusted, the boys carried in wood and made shavings and kindling for the next day’s fire. The first pupil to arrive at the school in the morning was to light the fire — often with half frozen fingers. The big barrel type stove was in the centre of the room, heated the ceiling better than the floors. It never gave enough heat to reach into the corners or the back of the room. Lunch buckets were set close to the stove so the sandwiches weren’t frozen and desks were drawn up tightly to benefit as much as possible from the heat.

When classes first commenced, the cold and snow clogged roads necessitated that terms were for only eight months of the year, from May 1st to the end of December. Sometime after 1924 the term was lengthened to start in March and as road conditions improved, it followed to the regular school term.

Asked for some fond recollections of those days, one chap recalled the discomfort of one little bashful boy who was tormented by a cute girl who was delighted to kiss him at the slightest suggestion from her school mates.

Another girl remembers the ruckus created by someone’s lunch being wrapped in a Sentinel newspaper, the Orangeman’s paper. A Catholic child inadvertently took the paper home and this was cause for another split in the community.



Pupils at Rio Grande School, 1922. Mary O’Connell, Evelyn Ramsey, Rose Bourdon, Pearl Robinson, Florence Cook, Jim Morrison, Robert Kenny, Armand Bourdon, Mary Scheill.

For many years the school house was the only meeting place and so it became the social centre. Of course all the exciting school meetings were held there — but differences could be forgotten when there were concerts, minstrel shows or church services in the of-fing. The annual sports day dance was held in the school house and dance parties held regularly where neighbours got together as one big happy family and visited and danced until the wee small hours. Babies went to sleep and were laid on the benches, covered with coats and woe betide the unfortunate person who sat on a cherub. The first musicians are reported to be Frank Stevenson on the violin and Earl Jones on the banjo.

When childrens’ feet ceased to wend their way to the school doors, the building was moved to the Hill building site, leaving an empty school yard and a sense of desertion in the hearts of those who had grown up with the “school house” the centre of their youthful lives.

#### JULY 1ST RIO GRANDE SPORTS AND RODEO

The first Rio Grande sports was organized in 1916



and 1917 by Dan and John O'Connell. In those early days it was in the form of a picnic, children's races, adult tug of war and nail driving contest for men and women. It was advertised by signs posted on fence posts. Then from 1918 to 1924, the sports were held on Bedier's farm, now the Liberty place. Then on the Joe Simms' farm. By this time they built a rough plank dance floor and the outside dances were a great event. Added by this time were baseball games, softball and basketball for the ladies. The horse races were held without a track; the crowds lined up and away you went! The first one at the end was the winner. Many a jockey headed for the tall timbers when his horse bolted.

Race horses to be remembered were owned by Frank Donald, the Mackintosh brothers, the Leckie girls and Pearl Robinson. When it came time for the bucking, there were no corrals, so someone held the bucking horse down, someone chewing on its ear and a blindfold was removed. Survival of the fittest!! Riders in those contests were Jack Abel, Henry McNeil, the Webber brothers, Barney Hogg, Jimmy Slaughter, Laurie Lock, Louie Jackem and others forgotten. Many a farmer would unharness one of the team he had brought and put on a real bronc ride show.

In 1927 the sports and rodeo were moved to the Red Willow Sports Grounds where it continues today. A beautiful circle of trees and the river provided a perfect setting. Corrals were built and grandstands, and booths were provided and gone was the picnic basket.



Rio Grande Sports, Jonas Webber up.



Rio Grande Rodeo.



Rio Grande Sports, Frank Cage is the "pick up" man.



At the Rio Grande Sports, 1919.

Rio Grande Sports, 1928.





... NINTH ANNUAL ...

# RIO GRANDE SPORTS

TO BE HELD ON

LET 'EM  
BUCK



'Atta Boy'

## FRIDAY, JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 1927

### Bucking Contest - Surcingle Riding,

20 Horses to Leave the Chutes . . Saddles Subject to Judges' Approval

### Horse Racing Novelty Race, Slow Race

QUICK CHANGE RACE

### Tug o' War on Horseback - Full Line of Athletic Events



## BASEBALL Basketball

## TOURNAMENT

“

ENTRIES TO BE IN BY

### June 15th

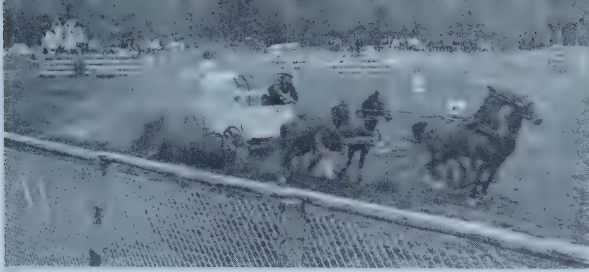
NOVELTY OPEN AIR DANCE IN EVENING, GOOD MUSIC  
Admission to Grounds 50c. SUITABLE PRIZES FOR ALL EVENTS

LANCE DOWD, President.

Kindly Leave Your Dogs at Home

GRAND PRIZE \$100.00

LEO COOK, Secy.-Treas.



Rio Grande Stampede, 1966.

Being beside a river, they added greasy pole walks. Some who tried it were unsteady on their feet by this time and invariably fell in. Likewise a circular race track was built. I recall when a lovely race horse crowded the rail and one of the protruding poles ran right through the horse and out the other side. The horse was ridden by Yukola Pool and owned by Reg Leake, the Beaverlodge photographer. That lovely horse had to be shot!

One of the highlights was the Indian Pow-Wows. The Indians would start arriving three days before the sports and the tom-toms would be heard for miles and for three days after the sports.

Now in 1974 they still have one of the most beautiful sports grounds in the Peace River country. There is ample camping grounds but only a few tents are seen; the trailers and campers have taken over. Even the Indians travel in comfort. Large bleachers serve the crowds of about 4000 who still flock to see the show that has gone on for 57 years! A modern race track starter starts the thoroughbred horses and loud speakers boom out events over the air. Progress has taken over but the tradition goes on! The Calgary Stampede is well known for its glamour and nearly everyone of the Peace has seen it, but they go back to the real thing, the unsophisticated Rio Grande Stampede and Sports day. It is well to look to the chutes because the next rider may be your neighbour.

### THE IDA ROBINSON STORY

My mother, Ida Robinson was born Ida Charters, sister of Elmer Charters in Moncton, New Brunswick. My dad was born in Boston and we came to the Peace River country in 1917 to file on a homestead north of Rio Grande. What a change of occupation for them! Mother had been a top dressmaker in Boston for 30 years and dad a fireman. A little log shack went up, which was to be home until mother passed away in 1935.

Mother made the most of those hard years. She worked like a man, clearing land and in later years went into the hog business. I can still see the tub of grain boiling away on the old stove. On cold winter days the pigs got hot meals! A strange life for a talented artist — yes she was one of the best in oil paintings, many of her friends will remember them. Never a lesson in her life but a God-given gift. She had spent a year in Honolulu painting at one time, but because of health she was forced to leave there. Her dream was to take me back some day but it never came true.

With all her busy days, mother had time for anyone who needed help or to stop and roll up her sleeves and cook the finest meal ever. At one time in her busy

years she had been a pastry cook in a large hotel. The first two years mom would leave the farm for the winter and go to Edmonton to return to her dress making talents and make a bit of money to sink into the farm.

I so well remember that while out there when Christmas time came around she would go shopping for the neighbour kids back home. Oh those parcels! Little goodies, dolls etc. for which she would sit and sew; a world of love and humanity went into those parcels she sent back to Rio Grande. Yes she made Christmas happier for many!

My mom had acquired a great deal of medical knowledge through her years and so was on stork-call all over, or if any neighbour was stricken they would come dashing for her. I remember the time a child had fallen on a piece of glass. It was driven right through his lip. Mother got the glass out and then skillfully stitched the cut. The child grew up with only a tiny scar!

I just have to tell you about one day, mom's birthday, when Jack O'Connell came galloping up the road with his one horse buggy. "Ole" Pete the horse was white with foam even though we were in the grip of a fall blizzard. The time had arrived for the baby. I was supposed to remain at home but howled and was snatched up to go along. When we arrived at O'Connell's I was promptly marched down to the chicken house to join Mary and Nellie. There was no room in the shack for kids just then. Jack had set up an old air-tight heater to keep us warm and there we spent the day, the silence broken by the hens' cackle of egg announcements and the rooster trying out his lungs.

It turned out to be a long ordeal and "little Neil" finally arrived, but with pneumonia! Mother won the battle and his birthday will always remain in my memory.

Dad never really turned out to be a true westerner. One of his specialties was getting lost. He went riding one day on his fiery little horse and night came on, but no dad. We were all getting anxious when we heard a "Hallooooo!" We opened the door to hear a voice say, "Could someone tell me where the hell I am?" It was dad!

I think back to those happy days when people took the time to be neighbours. It was nothing to see two or three wagon loads of people pull into the yard; out would come scads of kids, then the whole gang would



Ida Robinson, Pearl, Dad.



end up with mom's famous cooking. On my birthdays she would invite every child around. And the biggest birthday cake you ever saw would soon disappear! Mother would invite every bachelor far and near to Christmas dinner. Each one I recall brought some little trinket, out of the bottom of an old trunk, but each a heart-given gift of gratitude. Each one went away smacking his lips, happier that someone "cared".

Years went by and time took its toll. My dad died suddenly at a school meeting. His body was sent back to rest in his beloved Boston. Time and too much hard work caught up to mom. And one beautiful fall day after a hard day's stooking mom took a fatal heart attack, and I was alone.

I'm sure as people read this it will bring back memories of her. She lived as she died "Do unto others". A great lady!

#### FRANK SCHILL

Frank Schill was born and educated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was teaching in Hartney, Manitoba when he met up with the O'Connell's and when they left for the Peace River country he came with them. Though not a farmer, he decided to try his hand at it and filed on the NW 36-70-12-W6. He married Mary O'Connell in 1915.

They adopted Mary Colbert, seven years old and she after completing school at Rio Grande went to work for Jack Thirds in Grande Prairie. After approximately a year she went to Edmonton and worked in Birks Jewellery Store. Later she married Fred King and they had two children. She passed away about four years ago in Vancouver.

Frank did much of his farming in the early days with oxen. He also hauled mail from Lake Saskatoon with one ox and one horse.

Mrs. Schill was an invalid for 11 years but through that period she manifested a patience and cheerfulness in her sufferings which endeared her to an ever widening circle of friends and neighbors. She passed away April 16, 1936 at 48 years.

Frank remarried in 1939 and left in summer of 1942 for Dawson Creek where he worked as a bookkeeper for Spinney Trucking. He passed away in 1955. His wife Marie still lives in Dawson Creek.

Neil O'Connell now owns his homestead.

#### MR. AND MRS. B. C. SCULLY

Mr. and Mrs. B. C. Scully came into the Peace River country in 1916. Mr. Scully was interested in construction work and was one of those who helped bring the steel as far as Grande Prairie. Being favourably impressed with this area he decided to make his home here and filed on a homestead in the district later known as Rio Grande, the name suggested by the Stumpf brothers, Min and Clayt. They also had homesteaded in the area and had just returned here, having spent the winter in the balmy climate of the real Rio Grande.

Mr. and Mrs. Scully had one son, John, who attended school in Rio Grande and Grande Prairie and from there joined the Air Force in World War II and sadly became one more casualty in the service of his country.

In 1944 Mr. and Mrs. Scully sold their farm and moved to Calgary. A few years later both had passed away.

#### NED SECHRIST AND NICK SIGSWORTH — by Pearl Cook

Ned Sechrist came into the Peace River in 1914 over the Edson Trail. He was a very gentle talking gentleman and an ex-schoolmaster. In spite of the hardships of the years he never lost the manner that endeared him to all that knew him. He spent most of his time blacksmithing and trapping in the winters. There was a creek near his place where he dug coal to do his work.

We do not have details on Nick Sigsworth, only that he had spent some time in the Yukon and was a tough, wiry little man.

#### DAVE SHESLEY

This gentle little old man came in over the Edson Trail with Ed and Mabel Duteau and homesteaded just east of the Rio Grande store. He had a hobby of whittling out diamond willow and his collection was fabulous. Through the years it has just gotten lost.

He drove the mail for years to Rio Grande from Beaverlodge by team. I can remember bitter cold nights, waiting with all the rest of the crowd for hours for Dave to come trotting in with his sleigh bells ringing, and his "little ponies," as he called them, white with frost. His beard would have icicles hanging from it, like walrus tusks but he always came through.

He was such a kind little man and it was sad to see in later years, how he became confused and towards the end was certain "crickets were taking over his farm." But those who knew him will not forget this gentle little mail-driver of yesteryear.



Dave Shesley, the mail hauler with Nora Shook, teacher, Verna and Evelyn Ramsey, 1922.

#### JOHN SHEPPARD STORY — by Mrs. Laura Sheppard

At the urging of his brother Ed who had already acquired a quarter of land in this district in 1916 and who insisted in his letters that this surely was God's country, my husband, John Sheppard thought we could try it and with that decision we left our home in southern Ontario on May 25, 1918 and arrived in Grande Prairie on June 1, 1918. Since there were just the two sons in their family, Mr. and Mrs. Sheppard, Senior came with us to make their home with their boys.

At the land office in Grande Prairie we found a half section open in this district so John filed on the south quarter and his father filed on the north quarter which his sons had agreed to break and crop in their parent's behalf.

In due time and without mishap we arrived at Ed's quarter and the next day drove the two miles west to where our future home would be.

Later, when it was decided a school was needed in our neighborhood, they asked for enough land off the north quarter for a school house, playground and school barn.

A school district was formed and given the name of Cariboo School District and a log school house was built, known as Cariboo school. It still stands on the old site, though now deserted with the passing of country schools.

In the intervening years Mr. and Mrs. Sheppard Senior and their sons John and Ed have passed away.

John Sheppard and his wife had one son, Tom who with his mother are still residents of the Rio Grande district.

#### **CHRIS SORENSON — by Pearl Cook**

I regret that I know so little about the little man called Chris Sorenson. He was a real oldtimer, quiet and gentle-voiced.

He trapped and prospected during his years in this country. It is told how he would appear at the country store at Rio Grande, order a sack of salt, a bag of flour and a package of tea, and be gone for months. The store, at this time, was owned by Ewen MacDonell. One thing he could do well was ski. Many who knew him remember that he could ski as fast as a good horse could trot. He spent his life alone in the bush, and, sad to say, was found dead on a dry river bed. The tragic story could be read from the signs, and those who found him thought he had lost his reasoning. The signs showed how he had moved his camp many, many times, just going in circles until the end finally came.

#### **EDGAR STOCKDALE — by Pearl Cook**

Edgar Stockdale came from England and bought a farm north of Rio Grande. The first we saw of him was when some one said, "You have a new neighbor moved onto the old Stevenson farm". I being only small and curious took off to meet the "new neighbor". Poor fellow — he had got chilly during the night and had made a fire on the floor of the house to keep warm. He lay unwashed as he had a severe nosebleed and was an awesome sight. He had no water, so here I came dragging him down to my mother's to clean up. I'm sure my poor old mother nearly flipped.

We informed him that he could get water from the spring beside our house. But he chose the wrong time to come, in the middle of the night. My mother heard this banging around so she took the old shot gun and let fly up in the air.

Edgar never returned at night again. Another time he hired out to help a farmer and he put the harness on backwards. He did not remain long on his farm. He soon drifted out of the country.

#### **THE STUMP BROTHERS — by Pearl Cook**

The Stump brothers came to the Rio Grande dis-

trict in 1916. I do not know too much of their history but one of them was a druggist by trade and the other an artist who drew pictures for the old T. Eaton catalogue. Later he left the area and returned to work for the Eaton Co.

#### **ELMUS TAYLOR**

Elmus Taylor came with his mother and sister Malinda to Rio Grande in 1928. Also with the family were Mrs. Ada Brown, Dave and Len. Len was married and lived in La Glace, later moving to Halcourt where he farmed for some years.

Malinda married Tom Haden. They lived on the flats along the Red Willow. Elmus tells of hauling water for five years to 13 horses, then digging a flowing well.

His mother will be remembered for her very erect stance when driving a one horse buggy. She was often accompanied by her other daughter Mrs. Pluis.

They were regular worshippers at the Anglican church at the corner of the Frank Morrison land.

Elmus broke horses to saddle and harness for part of his living. He was often called upon by neighbours to use his natural ability in caring for sick animals.

Once he had literally a hair-raising experience while returning from weed trimming on the Liberty farm. A wolf crossed the horse pasture towards him from the bush. Harold Attwood's dog near the south fence seemed like a pup in comparison. He brandished the sickle he was carrying at the wolf, while walking backwards. On approaching the house he called loudly to Mrs. Liberty to bring the rifle. Mrs. Liberty shot and Elmus' hair slowly returned to normal.

Elmus is now retired in a comfortable shack on the Liberty farm.

#### **ANDY VAN HOLLAND — by Pearl Cook**

Andy must not be forgotten, for as a child I remember him well. He was a Pennsylvania Dutch man and came to Wembley the year the railroad arrived there in 1924. He was a tall, powerfully built man, with long white hair and a long flowing beard — I can see him yet. His main occupation was sawing wood for the whole area which took in across the Red Willow river to all the settlements. To this he had added a chopping outfit, the only one for miles around in those days. If this sounds strange to you it meant chopping grain for livestock. Somehow his appearance was fierce until you got to know him. He had piercing blue eyes and always delighted in teasing the children by chasing them. I, among the rest, ran for dear life when he appeared but not for long as he would take out his ever present sack of peppermints and soon we'd be sitting on his knee while he chuckled and told us stories.

Andy had the strongest voice I've ever heard, it is true when I tell you this. He would stop out on the road a quarter of a mile away and yell — "Any wood to saw today?" and believe me you heard him! So it was always a highlight when "Old Andy" pulled into your yard. If there was a good cook he usually spent the night telling tales, and the next day away he went, until the next time the wood pile was ready.

He ended his famous days by squatting down by the



Red Willow river raising sheep. With his passing went an irreplaceable character, "Old Andy." I'm sure he's hollering "Halooooo there, any wood to saw?" in far away places!

#### WESLEY WENZEL

Wesley and Catherine Wenzel, with two small sons arrived at Kleskun Hills in 1922, coming from Ontario. They farmed there for four years and moved to Rio Grande in 1923. Wesley arrived at the homestead in good time but Catherine took a little longer to make the trip as she was driving a team of mares with colts at their sides, on a lumber wagon and had a 2 month old baby to care for.

Earlier, a thresher-man's cookhouse had been hauled with 6 horses, from Kleskun Hills for them to live in. The homestead cost was \$10. Fifteen acres were broken the first year with horses.

George McGrew had previously homesteaded joining Wes Wenzel on the north. Pete Kvittum, the Julius Bourdon family, Lars Kvittum, Nels Carlson, Jim Hatton, Charlie Engstrom and George Beadle were a few of the early pioneers close by. Wes hauled grain to Wembley and broke land for Bill Liberty to help keep the groceries coming.

Stumps were so plentiful on the homestead he found an easier way, with a stump-pulling windlass. His team, Buster and Doe were then able to pull them out several at a time.

Many were the trips back into the nearby bush for blueberries, to the Halcourt hill for saskatoons, and to the Wapiti for those lovely wild raspberries.

There were many helpful hands as the family had now grown to four.

The original long cookhouse served many years to offer hospitality to neighbours families at U.F.A. card parties and Christmas functions.

Son Clarence married Margaret Erskine and farms the home place. Darcy married Anne Ratlidge and lives in Edmonton. Hazel is now Mrs. Frank O'Connell and Norma married Jim Walker, now living in Dawson Creek.

Mrs. Wenzel passed away in 1949. Wes married Nellie Erskine and they have retired to live in Beaverlodge. Here they took in foster children until Mrs. Wenzel felt the work was too much for her. Over 80 now, Wesley still enjoys his own home and visitors.

#### GEORGE WHITE

I was born in Honiton, Devonshire, England in 1892. My parents were farmers there and I had farming in my mind when I came to Canada at the age of 16 years.

I spent the first couple of years in Ontario. One fall I came west on a harvest train and have been here ever since. I was just 18 then. In Edmonton I got a job as a teamster, freighting for Revillion Brothers. I hauled logs, gravel, lumber and many other things. As a matter of interest, I hauled the logs to build the first bank in the town of Peace River, in 1914 and also brought in the first safe for the bank. It was a branch of the Bank of Commerce.

In the fall of 1915 I was back in Edmonton working on the ED & BC. In 1916 I came with a party of landseekers as far as Spirit River, which was the end of the steel at that time. In Grande Prairie I filed



Mr. and Mrs. George White, 1973.



George White and one of his 'beauties.'

"blind" on a homestead, SE 3-71-12 W6 on March 1, 1916. I arrived at the site of my homestead to find it was a bush quarter with lots of work ahead of me, but it suited me and I am still living on it.

Some of the settlers already here when I came were Dan, Jack and Jim O'Connell, Frank Schill, B. McNaught and some bachelors named Nick Sigsworth, Ned Sechrist and Nick Lingrell, who ran a little store. Soon after others came in, among them Billy Antcliffe, Ed Phelps and Reg, Clarence and Bill Kievers who lived in a sod shanty built in the shape of a teepee till they got a log house built. Then there were the Kuzmik brothers and a family named Hoover who lost a little girl in 1918. They buried her on the homestead and her grave has always been respected by subsequent owners of the land. Louis Holtz owns that place now.

When I wrote home to England that I had a homestead, my mother sent me some money with instructions to buy a good cow which was to start my

herd. But instead I bought a wagon and a load of groceries and other supplies. I arrived at the site of my cabin and left the loaded wagon close by. Somehow sparks set fire to it and I lost everything, so I had neither supplies nor cow with which to begin.

There was a big fire that swept through the country in 1916. It was a terrifying thing; homesteaders burnt out, wild animals fleeing and all settlers living in fear. I remember helping Dan O'Connell fight the fire. Fortunately it stopped at the Red Willow river. Another experience I had with fire came some years later when my barn burnt down.

A trip to Jasper stands out in my memory. It was the spring of 1924 when I took 26 head of horses over the mountains to sell in Jasper. Most were mine. Some belonged to Jimmy Young, who had a bit of a trading post at Kelly Lake, B.C. with his partner by the name of Andrews, who had also taught school there. Jimmy went along on that trip and we hired an Indian by the name of Sam Wilson as guide. He was a good man to have along. We had to blaze trail in some places. When we came to rivers we would swim the horses across and build rafts to get ourselves over. The trip took nearly a month and is something to remember. Many stories I could tell about that adventure. We saw lots of wild life, grizzlies, wolves, moose, caribou, wild ponies, and ate the best tasting trout ever. One piece of bad luck happened on that trip. One of the horses got startled at something, missed its footing and plunged, over the side of the mountain we were traversing, down about 400 feet I should judge, so we lost that one.

When we got to Jasper I sold the horses to the Brewster outfit for an average of about \$100. each. With my share I bought up more land and other essentials. In time I bought four quarters in all. I raised grain, cattle, horses and hogs, doing my own veterinary work as the need arose. We used homespun remedies in those days, applied with common sense.

Other things come to mind that took place in my life but there is just not space to tell it all. However in passing, I might mention that my brother Edward joined me in Canada in 1925. He filed on a homestead and proved it up, but in 1930 he decided to go back to England so I bought his land.

I remember the old Essex car I had in the 20's. What a sport I thought I was then!

The big change in my life came when I met Miss Beatrice Wills of Goodfare. In 1929 we were married and so ended my days of batching on the homestead. My wife and I raised four daughters and four sons. They went to the log Caribou school and years later our daughter Dina was herself a teacher in that same school.

Edna, our oldest child married Harold Attwood and they farm in the Halcourt area. Dina, Mrs. Dave Rayner, graduated from U. of A. and has a teaching degree. They are living in British Columbia where they operate a holiday resort. Nora, Mrs. Robert Sorenson, is a registered nurse in Edmonton. Ethel, Mrs. Bruce Cleland, lives in Kitimat, B.C. She works in a bank there and her husband for the aluminum company. Charles, our eldest son, married Joan Stoll of Wembley and farms in the Rio Grande district. He

is active in the 4H movement and at present is leader in the beef club. George married Laura Webb of Bashaw. He works for a utilities firm. Fred, as yet unmarried, farms my land along with his own and lives at home. Alan married Judy Church of Edmonton. Judy is a nurse and Alan has a teaching degree from U. of A.

We have a total of 15 grandchildren and one great-grandson. In my time I served on the Rio Grande hall board, the Caribou school board, the Rio Grande sports committee and am a founding member of Alberta Wheat Pool.

In 1957 I went back to England for a visit and since that was my first airplane ride it proved to be another highlight in my life.

## TIMES HAVE CHANGED

In 1928 John O'Connell engaged J. Archer, Barrister of Wembley to transact some business. The following is a partial listing of the charges, which seem almost infinitesimal by today's standards.

June	12	Letter to Parker enclosing Transfer with instructions for signing same....	.04
	12	Letter to Registrar for abstract and General Registration Certificate and paid.....	2.02
	30	Letter to Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs for amount required to either purchase or redeem the above lands.	.02
August	6	Letter to Parker advising land in the name of the Government.....	.02
	10	Letter to Parker asking for amount the Government require to redeem the land and also to sign an order on the bank.	.02
	22	Letter to you advising title and transfer received from bank and amount required to redeem the land.....	.02
		Letter to Parker advising title and transfer received.....	.02
	27	Letter to Stewart-Irvine to proceed with loan.....	.02
	30	Letter to Department of Municipal Affairs enclosing draft and asking for statement of taxes.....	.02

## MY LIFE IN THE PEACE RIVER COUNTRY — by Mrs. Irvina Cook

I was born at Comeau's Hill, Yarmouth County, on March 14, 1927. Then I moved to Stony Island, Cape Sable Island in Shelburne County where I lived with my parents, sisters and brothers, the Cunninghams, until I was seven years old. Then we moved to Belleville, Yarmouth County, where I lived with the family until I married Ed Parker on June 21, 1945.

We came to Beaverlodge, November 28, 1945. On the train from Edmonton we met Joe Sims and came out to Rio Grande with Mrs. Barrett. Don Jordan came and got us in his truck and we came as far as Jordans and their log house. Then Don drove us to Art Beatley's place. We moved from there on to Bill Lucaw's farm place where we stayed for quite a while. Dale was born July 27, 1946. Then we moved on the south east quarter of the Beaverbrook school section into a sheep shed where Bruce the second son was born



on October 5, 1947. Four other Parker children, Ruth, Zene, Harvey and Randi were born between 1947 and 1955. Harvey died in infancy. Ed Parker died a few years later.

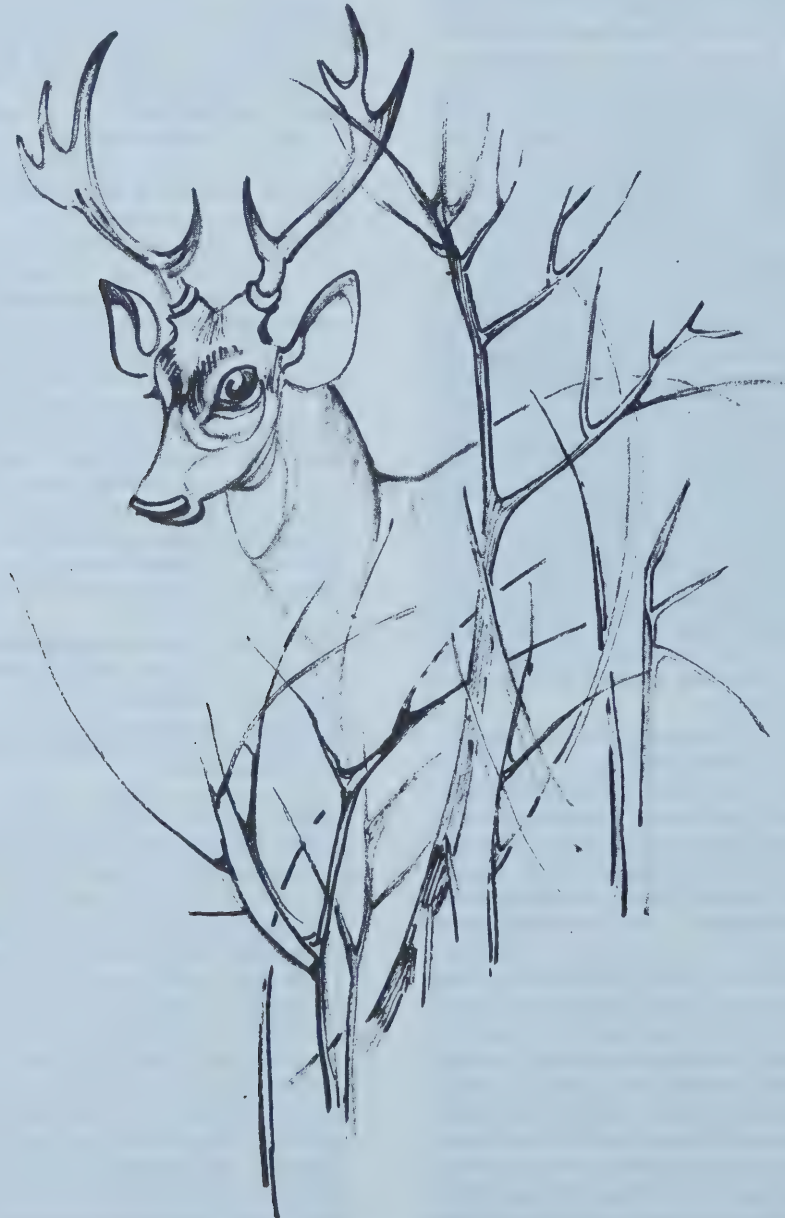
On May 30, 1959 I married Vivien Joseph Cook and three children were born of this union, Susan Jane, Joy Mary Ellen and Martin John.

On the 11th of October Dale was hurt on the tractor, was taken to the Beaverlodge hospital where he passed away. That was in 1964, and the same year Randi died from spinal meningitis in the Grande Prairie hospital, August 27. I suffered a nervous breakdown.

On April 28, 1973 I went back to Nova Scotia and stayed until August 12 when I went to Oshawa, Ontario for a visit the end of August. When I came back to Beaverlodge, Mrs. Mike Silvaniuk drove me to Mrs. Ione Nichol's where I stayed overnight.

It was nice to go back home after 28 years and see the Cunningham family. But it was nicer to return to the Peace River country. The good Peace River country is home to me.

The new settler was bait for "the boys" even from his arrival. When he bought a horse he was reluctant to open its mouth to determine its age by teeth inspection. "I had a bad cold and did not want to pass it on to the poor animal." When he bought a set of harness, the boys called around the next day for a few dollars more to pay for the lines as they were not included in the deal. After that they collected for the tugs, the hames, even the hame straps. It was an expensive set of harness and the boys enjoyed their bit of fun with the new settler.





# TWO RIVERS

## THE TWO RIVERS DISTRICT — by Doreen Longson

Two Rivers derived its name from its location, situated in the triangle formed by the joining of the Red Willow and Beaverlodge rivers. These rivers were a great asset to the district as they provided water, lumber, coal, gravel, fishing, hunting and recreation.

At a meeting in Halcourt July 9, 1917 the settlers decided the Two Rivers School District No. 3497 should be formed. The first chairman was M. H. Whistler. J. W. Cotton was secretary-treasurer at a salary of \$12.00 per year.

At a further meeting on October 17, an assessment of ten cents per acre was struck, part of which could be two day's work at \$3.00 per day. On December 5, the trustees undertook to borrow \$500 for the purpose of building a schoolhouse and equipping it. The first debenture coupon was due March 15, 1919 and the final on March 15, 1928.

The annual meeting, January 15, 1918 decided that a schoolhouse 18' x 26' be built. The board set J. W. Cotton's salary as secretary-treasurer at \$25 per annum and hired Ole Larson and Joe Bateman to build the school.

Costs must have been greater than had been anticipated as a ratepayers meeting was called August 10, 1918 and the school was closed for the balance of the year. The trustees were asked to borrow a further \$500 to pay outstanding accounts.

The first teacher was Miss Verna S. Elliott and the second William Sherry. In 1918 the school was closed for the duration of World War I and the pupils were vanned to Lower Beaverlodge. The trustees paid the Lower Beaverlodge School Division 75¢ per day and

Oakford \$1.00 per day for the transportation of the pupils.

The school re-opened in 1927 with Miss Rita Cleland as teacher. In 1930 Miss Myrtle Dryer was teacher. The district was still having financial problems and both these teachers had to wait long periods for their salaries. Miss Cleland received final payment December, 1933 and Miss Dryer March 1934.

In 1931 an order was placed for trees to be planted for a windbreak. In 1933 Miss Doris Irvine accepted the teacher position at a salary of \$600. Also in 1933 it was decided to build a barn, wages were to be \$1.50 per day. When the school was cleaned, the old stove pipes were sold to James Dixon for 50¢. Miss Marion Dixon was the new teacher in 1934.

On September 25, 1936 the board decided to teach grade nine and to have a teacher qualified to teach the higher grade. Miss Kae Chekaluk was engaged and received the increased salary of \$750 per year. Grade nine pupils from Halcourt and Lower Beaverlodge attended school in Two Rivers.

Mrs. McNab substituted for a period of time in 1937. Miss Doris Vernon was engaged in August 1937 and a player piano was purchased. The impact of these splendid teachers was expressed by one youth, "We want to secure enough education so that when we know what we want to do, we shall be prepared."

Water was a continuing problem — sometimes it was hauled by men in the district from various sources and sometimes by teachers or pupils from Ben Cooke's well, a quarter of a mile away. Several times an effort was made to build a skating rink but with the water shortage, plans never materialized and any skating was done at Longson's lake.

At the 1938 annual meeting there was considerable discontent regarding the formation of the enlarged



school district and because of the unsettled state of affairs the district decided to retain possession of its books, cash, etc. During this period a typewriter and radio were also purchased, real assets for our school, through the efforts of the community. John Butler made improvements to the school and Jack West painted it.

Later a telephone was installed in the school courtesy of the local telephone company. In 1940 the Grande Prairie Divisional Board removed some of the equipment including the typewriter. It was requested to return such items and henceforth to notify the local board before removing other school property.

Again in 1941 the Grande Prairie Divisional Board was asked to return the typewriter to Two Rivers. This year Miss Edna Humphrey was teacher. In 1942 she became Mrs. Harry Sherk and continued her teaching duties.

Mrs. Isabel Perry came to our district in the fall of 1942 to stay for three years. The first years she travelled the distance from her home on horseback. Then for more convenience her house was moved to the school grounds. The teachers before this time had boarded at various homes in the district.

The 1945-46 term opened with Mrs. Halstead as teacher and the teacherage was placed on a foundation. Rowe Harris was chairman and Mrs. Pearl Longson secretary-treasurer until 1948 when Mrs. Nora Wheeler succeeded her.

At an annual meeting in 1944 a request was made for an addition to be added to the building as there just wasn't room enough for the pupils. Not until 1947 was this to become a reality, with an addition to the south end plus cloak rooms installed. A rural health unit was organized and the pupils received immunization shots and vitamins.

When the teacher shortage became acute, William Taylor was hired as a supervisor. The children did their lessons by correspondence for the next two years.

After many years of men in the district taking turns hauling and splitting wood for small sums of money, a coal stove was purchased in 1947. A coal shed was loaned by Harris Brothers.

In 1950 Mrs. Ron Morris came to teach, followed by Mrs. Florence Russell, the last teacher in the Two Rivers school. By now there was a smaller number of

students and centralization was the trend. In 1953 the school closed and the children attended school in Beaverlodge.

For many years during the winter months pupils took turns bringing ingredients and making hot soup. This was greatly appreciated on those cold days when the building didn't get warm until noon.

One highlight of the school year was the Christmas concert. The concert took at least a month of practising and provided an opportunity to get away from regular classes. Plays, pantomimes, recitations and carols were prepared. Mrs. McNab would spend many hours coming to our practises and helping with the music and there are many memories of this joyous time of year. A stage was built out of planks, curtains hung and a tree decorated. Everyone in the district turned out to see the concert and Santa arrived with candy and gifts for every child.

The school picnics held at the end of the year were usually down at the "Old Ford" along the Beaverlodge river on the John Ehrensperger farm. Every family arrived with lunches and home-made ice cream. There were races, ball games and swimming. It was a great time to get together with the neighbours.

As the school was the centre of social events as well as education, many church services, meetings, showers, card parties, dances and bingos were held there through the years. With the marriage of each girl of the district there was a presentation of a china dinner set.

Two Rivers district never had a church, the people of the community attended church at Halcourt. Mrs. Adams and Mrs. McNab were organists at the Halcourt United Church for many years. The ministers came from Lake Saskatoon and later Beaverlodge.

At times, church was held in the homes and for a period of time after World War II in the school. During the warmer months Sunday School for the children was held in the open.

The Two Rivers Mutual Telephone Company was organized on December 22, 1936. The first meeting was December 7, 1936 with E. Probst the chairman and E. C. Stacey the secretary-treasurer. Dave Thompson built the line in 1937 with some members erecting their own poles. Members were Eugene Probst, Cliff Stacey, Arnold Burgess, Art and Lawrence Lock, John Ehrensperger, Don McNab, Les Harris, James Dixon,



Back row, l-r: Ethel Rince, Myrtle Dixon, Ethel Lock, George Tyrrell, Dorothy Longson, Russell Metcalfe, Eva Metcalfe. 2nd row: Ruth Grimmett, Edith Ray, Marion Dixon, Linda Rince, Edna Tyrrell. Front row: Hazel Dixon, Madeline Tyrrell, Pearl Grimmett, Hannah Metcalfe.



At Jean Lock's, 1950. Top (L-R) Mrs. Irvine, Mrs. Warwick Burgess, Mrs. , Mrs. Nora Wheeler, Mrs. McNab, Madeline Chambers. Bottom: Mrs. Margaret Harris and Mary, Mrs. Arnold Burgess, Mrs. Harrop, Mrs. Doris Harris.



Alf and Bill Perdue, Dan Chambers and J. W. Cotton. In December 1943, Mrs. Olive McNab became secretary-treasurer, a job she held until 1961.

In 1964 the line was reconstructed by McGregor Contractors for dial conversion. The A.G.T. commenced work on underground cable in 1971 and by July 5, 1973 the company was dissolved.

The ladies of the community formed a U.F.W.A. local about 1940. They gathered in their homes or at the school teacherage for afternoon meetings. There were approximately 20 members and they helped with all community efforts. Mrs. McNab was the first president and Mrs. Arnold Burgess the first secretary-treasurer. In 1949 this group joined with the Hi-Way local which took in a larger area including Lower Beaverlodge.

In 1945 Rev. Douglas Carr organized a Boy Scouts troupe. The younger boys learned knot tying, bush survival and the proper way to play ball. Rev. Young continued with this group from 1946 to 1948. The teen-age girls formed a sewing club in 1947 and Mrs. Nora Wheeler was their leader.

For many years coal mining took place along the Red Willow river. It was a source of fuel for many during those early years. Though it was a very hot coal which burned the bricks out of the stoves, it was nice to have a fuel which kept the house warm all night.

Clarence Driggs, Jack Hamilton, Charlie Kruz, Bill Turner, Jesse Romaine, Cowgars, Jack Pettit and Jack Chase were some of the early settlers who mined the coal. Buck Schanuel operated a mine about 1928 followed by Dunbars who continued till 1941. Bill Fraser and Romaniuks strip mined after World War II.

George Ray and his sons Scotty and Jack operated a sawmill along the Red Willow in the winter of 1929.

Road gravel which has been hauled to different points in the county originated from the gravel pit along the Beaverlodge River on the Harrop land and Don Sherk property.

The men of this district have for many years been good farmers. They have grown and sold registered seed since as early as 1931 and in this district alone we have five Robertson Associates, the highest award granted by the Canadian Seed Growers Association. Rowe Harris and Lawrence Lock and Lawrence's son Ken have also received the Outstanding Service Award of the Alberta Branch of the Canadian Seed Growers Association. Lawrence recalls that he introduced registered seed into the district. He bought a few bags from Herman Trelle, loaded them into his Model T pick-up and started home. He really had to stop and visit Arnold Burgess in the field and tell him about it on the way home — and sold him two bags. Then Walter Willis heard of the seed and he wanted a start too, and then Don McNab followed suit. Lawrence, Don and Walter have been growing registered seed ever since — 40 years for the Locks — missing a few when Lawrence was in the army.

We are a proud community! Some of us are here for the third generation. Much credit should be given to our pioneers, parents and teachers. The younger generations have entered many walks of life and are successful in their ventures. Our little corner has gotten along well enough to achieve many goals and has helped each other in time of need.

#### JOSEPH BATEMAN

Joe Bateman was an uncle of Mrs. Henry Lock and a veteran of the Riel Rebellion of 1885. He worked as a carpenter in Calgary after his wife died in childbirth in Ontario. In 1912 he left Calgary to become one of the

Harvesting creeping red fescue seed.





first settlers in the Two Rivers district on SW 3-71-10-W6.

Joe was an excellent carpenter and helped build the Two Rivers school and the Halcourt Methodist Church. Joe put a huge Bible in the Church. It has since disappeared.

In retirement he moved into the town of Beaverlodge but for many years he tried to be at the farm at harvest time. He was very deaf in later years, but was still a staunch Orangeman and a proud and religious man.

He died in 1945 in the Salvation Army Eventide Home in Edmonton at the ripe old age of 100 years.

#### **ARNOLD BURGESS**

Arnold and Alfred Burgess were born near Edmonton but never quite convinced anyone that they didn't come from England. In reality the family had moved to England from Edmonton when the boys were quite young. After Arnold and Alfred were married they returned to Canada, arriving at Beaverlodge in May, 1930. Arnold bought the N.E. 2-71-10 and built a house there. Alfred bought land in the Hayfield district.

Bessie, Arnold's wife arrived with their children Maurice, Warwick and Marjorie in September. With them came Alfred's wife, Beaty and their two children. Arnold and Bessie's next two children, Elaine and Sheila were born at Grande Prairie and Barbara at Beaverlodge.

Arnold was very active in community affairs. He was on the Two Rivers school board, helped to organize a group of six neighbours to buy a threshing outfit, to get phones installed and later the power line. He was a director of the Peace River Seed Growers, Alberta Seed Growers and Canadian Seed Growers Associations. Arnold was awarded the Robertson Associate Membership on June 21, 1950 at Fredericton, New Brunswick. He was a registered seed grower for 31 years. Arnold was a member of the U.F.A., C.C.I.L., A.F.U. and N.D.P. He was also Alberta Wheat Pool delegate and served on the boards of the Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge Co-ops.

The Burgesses lived on the farm at Two Rivers until Arnold passed away in 1962, ending an era of family life and a social life that had centred mostly around the Two Rivers school.

Maurice married Margaret Anderson of Beaverlodge and is a welder in Grande Prairie. They have a son Ralph and two daughters Rose and Isobel.

Warwick married Jean Paverly of Wembley. Warwick is an English instructor at N.A.I.T. and sings in the Edmonton Symphony Chorus. Jean is a librarian at the Canadian Wildlife Services. They have a family of three, Stephen, Jeffrey and Karen.

Marjorie married Alton Parry of Wembley who drives a school bus for the County. They have a son and three daughters. Bruce is at N.A.I.T., Mavis is a stenographer in Grande Prairie. The other two girls Joyce and Lorraine are still in school.

Sheila married Albert Weiting of Glen Park, Alberta and they live at Leduc. Albert works for Woodward's at Edmonton. They have a son Murray and a daughter Jody in school.

Elaine married Corney (Jack) Epp of Grande

Prairie. They moved from Ft. St. John to Vernon, B.C. in 1973 where Corney is a mobile home salesman and Elaine nurses part time. Keith and Garry are both in school at Vernon.

Barbara married Stan McReavey of Edmonton and lives in Calgary. Stan is an employee of Mobile Oil. Barbara nurses part time at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary. They have four children — Shawn, Mark, Erin and Kevin all in school in northwest Calgary.

Bess Burgess lives in Grande Prairie and keeps happy with work for Senior Citizens, U.C.W., the Auxiliary to Central Park Lodge and bowling. In recent years she has travelled extensively.

#### **CAMPBELL BROTHERS**

The Campbell Brothers lived on the banks of the Red Willow just below the Graf place. One brother, Wallace was married with a son Malcolm who went to school at Two Rivers and the other brother, Bill was single. Bill worked for Ben Cook, Lawrence Lock and Eugene Probst. He started to build his shack right on the road allowance in spite of his neighbours' protests. He borrowed tools to do it and broke most of them, then left before he finished the shack.

Wallace didn't break up more than a garden spot but he had wonderful gardens. He had a root cellar on the top of the bank and his garden between that and the cabin right on the river's edge. Eugene Probst remembers that after he recovered from an ulcer operation he worked for the municipality of Grande Prairie, then moved to Edmonton. Ten years later Wallace's son came to Probst to inquire about the whereabouts of his father so it seems he had just disappeared.

#### **COTTON AND ADAMS — by Austin Adams**

My ancestors on both sides were from Wiarton, Ontario. My grandfather, Thomas S. Cotton and his two sons Willie and Whitfield moved to Manitoba in 1905. My father, R. J. Adams and his wife, Ella May (Cotton) moved with them. Later my grandfather remarried and he, his wife and my two uncles Willie and Whitfield headed for Grande Prairie via the old Edson Trail.

My father, Robert James Adams moved to Swift Current, Saskatchewan in 1912. It was a dry belt so they too decided to homestead where the Cottons had located at Halcourt. He walked over 400 miles to file on a claim. After acquiring his homestead he came home and loaded a car of settlers' effects which included cattle, horses, machinery, furniture and "Westward Ho!" Mother, myself (Austin) and brother Leslie followed later and were to be met in Edson. The end of steel was at McLennan and from there we followed the Edson Trail.

Grandfather and Uncle Willie met us with two teams so we had four teams with loaded sleighs. Grandfather had a tent on a flat rack for mother, the children, a dog, 1200 pounds of flour, and furniture. A camp stove kept us warm most of the time. The bunkhouses were the worst. That's where you got the cooties and straw in your face.

We stayed at grandpa's until Uncle Willie's new house was finished on his homestead and we moved there until dad got his house built. My youngest



brother, Clarence was born June 10, 1916. We had a Saddlebag Doctor from Lake Saskatoon to attend mother.

Dad stayed three years to prove up the land and each year frost killed the wheat when it was in head. Schools were a problem too so dad decided to move back to Manitoba. After renting a few years, he bought a good farm at Isabella, Manitoba which we still own. Mother, who will be 92 years old in March, resides on the farm with Clarence.

Leslie, second oldest has been with the U.G.G. for 44 years. He has been in head office in Winnipeg for a number of years and is 65 this month so is retiring. He married Alice Cooper of Shortdale, Manitoba and has no family.

I married Anna Iverach in 1935 and we have two daughters, Joyce and Noreen. Joyce married John Ollmann and they have two children, Debra and Lorinda. They own a large furniture store in Winnipeg. Noreen married Robert Douglas; they also have two children. Noreen is an R.N. and also an instructor in O.R. technology at Base Hospital.

Anna and I moved to Winnipeg four years ago from Isabella and we live at 1026 Howard Avenue in Winnipeg.

Mrs. Adams played the organ at church. They had an organ at home and played for group gatherings and sing-songs and the literary club. Mr. Adams was a trustee on the school board. When Two Rivers school district was formed, they took an active part in its establishment.

#### **DANIEL AND BERTHA CHAMBERS — by Madeline Chambers**

Daniel Ward Chambers was born in Freelant, Ontario and in 1901 married Bertha Mae Cummins of Millgrove, Ontario. They farmed at Puslinch, Ontario, until 1912, when they moved to the Peace with their family, Ted, age nine, and Rhea, seven. Charles McNaught had been to the Peace and had returned to bring his family in, so the Chambers travelled with them. The party left Edson in March and reached its destination in July. Whatever household effects the Chambers could not load in Edson, were stored.

The first years were very difficult. Dan had to go to Edson for a grub stake and so he had to work out for two or three months to pay for it. There was a band of Indians who wintered at the Lower Crossing on the Beaverlodge river and when Dan was away, Chief Shetler would come to their place about once a week.

On the Edson Trail. Rhea Chambers and Betty McNaught standing on the first load. The horses are pulling the Dan Chambers load, with Mrs.

He would open the door and look in. He never came in but looked until he was sure Bertha and the two children were all right. He would hang rabbits and prairie chickens on a nail outside the house. When Dan would return, he would go down to the camp and invite the chief and his squaw to his home for supper.

The neighbors remember that Dan was a good blacksmith. They said he could make anything with blacksmith and horseshoe tongs — shearers, punches, clevises, chisels and side irons for water tanks. Joe Bateman and Dan made wagon boxes that were first rate products. Joe would do the woodwork and Dan the iron work.

There was no school in the district so Ted and Rhea had to walk to the Halcourt church where a make-shift school was taught by Marion Martin. Later they batched in a little shack in Grande Prairie. There they contracted measles and someone told Ted not to let Rhea catch cold. He put on a roaring fire, put every blanket and coat they had on her, and made her stay in bed. All this happened in May and at the Beaverlodge sports, Dr. O'Brien told Bertha about them so she went back with him. Poor Rhea was crying because she was so hot and Ted even had the windows covered up so there wasn't much light either. Ted was just as sick as Rhea was but he kept going. It was getting



Marion McNaught and Mrs. Chambers on The Edson Trail.

Chambers riding. Note the ox used for "snatch" power.







The Chambers' oxen team on the trail.

quite close to exam time so their mother stayed with them and had to read for them as their eyes were so sore.

Money was scarce so Ted quit school, got a job and helped Rhea so she could finish. She went to Normal School and became a teacher. Ted married Madeline Tyrrell and Rhea, Noel McLean.

Dan and Bertha were progressive and soon had a well-equipped homestead. Dan's I.H.C. tractor, purchased before 1920, powered a Red River Special separator owned by 13 district partners. For a time he was in the automobile and implement business in Hythe.

The family is all gone now. Dan died in 1951 and Bertha in 1957. Ted was killed by an earthmover on the Wapiti bridge. Rhea was in very poor health her last years and passed away at the Auxiliary Hospital in Grande Prairie.

#### **TED CHAMBERS**

Russell Theodore Chambers, better known as Ted was the son of Dan and Bertha Chambers and was born in Puslinch, Ontario.

He was nine years old when they came to the Peace River country over the Edson Trail. On the trail it was Ted's and Betty MacNaught's chore to keep the cattle from straying into the bush. His mother was terribly upset when one of her heifers fell over a cliff and was killed. It didn't help her grief any to have a chap come along and ask to have the meat for dog food.

Ted and Madeline Tyrrell were married in 1934 and had two children Dale and Joan. They farmed in the Two Rivers district.

Alex Monkman, Carl Brooks and Ted were the first to go through the Monkman Pass to Prince George. Ted's daughter was six months old when they camped by a small lake in the mountains and Ted named the lake for her, "Lake Joan."

He served with the Edmonton Fusiliers for five years during the war.

His favorite pastime was hunting and fishing, especially at the Wapiti river. He had a real talent for finding his way through the bush.

His hobby was gathering antiques and at one time had a very good collection of artifacts in his basement. When he died the family were given their choice and the rest went to the archives in Edmonton.

He was killed on July 5, 1965 in a freak accident on the Wapiti bridge.

His son Dale married Dorothy McFadzen and Joan married Verne Jones of Beaverlodge.

Madeline still resides in Beaverlodge. In her school days she had a pleasing voice and often sang at gatherings. In Beaverlodge she has been a very active community worker in her quiet way. She recalls that as a youngster Art Funnell of Halcourt Store was a bit of a tease and would ask her name. Possibly shyness precipitated confusion but she would reply, "I don't seem to know; When I'm out my parents call me Madeline but at home I'm Tiny!"

#### **BEN COOK**

In spite of Mrs. Lewis' attention, Ben Cook remained a bachelor. He came from Manitoba where he had been a railroad conductor and arrived in the Two Rivers district on August 10, 1910 to go homesteading. His reception was somewhat cool — his first night here there was a heavy frost and when Ben awakened the grass was stiff and white.

At first Ben used oxen which when turned loose seemed to have an affinity for Sam McNaught's oxen at Halcourt; he always knew where to find them.

Ben farmed three quarters of land, was a good farmer and kept a lovely place. But his claim to fame was his beautiful big Belgian horses. One horse was so broad in the chest that its feet wouldn't track on the built up roads of the early days. One neighbour followed him one day and saw the poor beast nearly played out from trying to pull and straddle the track. Finally Ben unhooked the horse and pulled that horse's share of the load himself out to the main road. Then he hitched up again!

Ben was very clever with a broad-axe. He made excellent buildings. He even hewed the inside of the barn logs — and made a nice haymow above.

Ben is also remembered for the mule he raised and which would not stay home. Good as Ben's fences were, that mule would roll under the bottom wire and be on his way.

Ben was stricken with a painful illness and his neighbours took him to the Grande Prairie hospital where he died in 1939. His estate was left to a half-brother who sold Ben's goods and chattels at auction

the next spring. Ben was buried in the Halcourt cemetery.

#### ERN AND JIM DIXON — by Isabel Perry

The Athabasca and Edson Trails were not the only ways to reach the Peace River country. James Dixon, originally from Nova Scotia and later working at Smithers, B.C. took the Pine Pass route to Pouce Coupe in 1914.

In the days when Prince George was little more than a few Indian cabins, Jim and four or five other men and five horses and with a map and compass to guide them, started out. At the Parsnip river, they were held up two weeks by high water. They built a log raft, loaded it with supplies and had the horses swim across with the raft. The horses were carried downstream into an eddy and were nearly lost. However the men got them out with ropes.

At Pouce Coupe he met Walter McFarlane who told him that he had recently finished surveying the Red Willow country and suggested that Jim look it over. The others returned to British Columbia and Jim filed on his homestead in June 1914 and earlier in May by proxy for Ernest. Ern was born at Oxford, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia in 1895. After coming west he worked at Smithers and Prince George where he hosted engines in the round house one winter before joining Jim at Beaverlodge.

In the fall of 1915 he boarded the E.D. and B.C. train at Edmonton and went to the end of steel 20 miles east of Pruden's Crossing, today's Watino then on by stage to the Big Smoky river. Here he boarded a freight boat going up river to Goodwin's Crossing. As the water was low that fall the passengers had to wade and push the boat in the shallow places.

The two brothers lived together for several years on Ern's homestead. Ern served overseas during World War 1, then came back to the farm.

As the Dixon buildings lay conveniently on the road leading to Beaverlodge, Grande Prairie and later, Wembley, for many years Jim and Ern kept a stopping place for settlers from the Rio Grande and districts west and south who were making the long haul to town. There was always feed and accommodation for the teams in the large barn and hospitality and cheer in the house.

The neighbours too enjoyed stopping and exchanging news and jokes. One story is that at a certain neighbour's farm usually a sleigh load gathered to go to the New Year's Dance in Beaverlodge. So Jim stopped in there one day during Christmas week and offered to take his team to the dance. His offer was accepted although Jim never danced. The night came and the group included five girls. On the way to Beaverlodge Jim turned and said, "Well, girls, I'm making \$2.00 a head on you tonight. Henry McNeil bet me \$10.00 that I couldn't take a girl to the dance tonight." Jim won the bet.

On another occasion Jim was visited by two door-to-door missionary girls and enjoyed their company until supper time approached. He was not inclined to offer them a meal so jumped up and seized his tub and said, "Well, girls! I always have a bath before supper." They beat a hasty retreat.

Another brother, George Dixon, came to live with Jim and Ern while recovering from a serious mine accident in Nova Scotia.

Eventually Jim moved to his own homestead and farmed there for many years. Then he sold his farm to James McNab, reserving the use of his house and garden. Here he lived as long as his health permitted. He is now at Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie where he celebrated his 97th birthday in 1974.

Ern Dixon eventually sold his farm to Wright Bradshaw, keeping a cabin on the farm for himself. Now that he had leisure time his neighbours enjoyed even more his ready help and subtle humor. When his health failed he moved to Beaverlodge, then to the Hythe Pioneer Lodge two years before his death in 1974 at the age of 78.

The Dixon brothers were quiet but in their own way were very expressive. With a few words and with subtle humor Ernie could communicate better than most people do. As for Jim, he was quite happy to remain composed and retiring until someone would bait him; the result was that his eyes would brighten, his face would break into a hearty smile, and he would launch forth into a dissertation which would outdo professional comedians and homespun philosophers. Ernie is remembered especially for his consideration of his neighbours. He was always attentive to their needs and would readily go out of his way to aid them in any way he could.

Jim always had time to visit. He quickly picked up or fabricated stories, always with a touch of realism and never downgrading or discouraging. Sometimes he left his listener wondering, such as his tale of having to camp on three stumps when coming through the Pine Pass to get away from the snakes. A visit to his shack was good for an hour's "raking over the neighbours." Even when he retired to the Old Folks Home in Hythe, then over 90, he was still in his prime as a spinner of tales and with a newly acquired source of Norwegian yarns. One concerned a fellow pensioner who was being pressed by members of his family to make a will and settle his affairs so that the family would someday be spared the anguish of possible law procedure. Finally the eldest son blurted out, "You see, dad, you don't take it with you." "I can't eh? In that case I'm not going."

Jim had plenty of visitors. Once he was sitting in his shack, hat and coat on, contemplating a visit to the neighbours, But company came and did not recognize Jim as the occupant. The talk was direct.

"A nice house but kind of small," was the opener.

"Suits the owner, no doubt but he must be sort of a character," replied Jim.

"Now take that picture."

"Poor taste," said Jim.

And so the visit went on, the visitors enjoying frank discussion and Jim egging them on.

Homesteaders went to work for neighbours in summer to enhance their meager income and funds were husbanded carefully. One somewhat morose bachelor neighbour needed harness and sent an order with a neighbour departing on a shopping trip to Edson.



On top of the load on the neighbor's return was a sewing machine, least of a bachelor's needs but no harness. Suspecting he was victim of a prank and utterly dejected that his hard earned money had been squandered, the bachelor withdrew to his own solitude. Jim and others knew that no harness had been available at Edson and that another family needed the sewing machine. But why give their friend the satisfaction of an explanation?

Many oldtimers attended the funeral of Mrs. Jessie Holmes, widow of the late Rev. Robert Holmes and toured the St. Andrew's on the Lake Anglican church yard and cemetery afterwards. It was a reunion of pioneers. Rev. Noel Holmes of Duncan, B.C., son of the departed saw Jim in the gathering and remarked. "Many years ago Jim worked for us and we shared a bed. Once Jim woke me up in the middle of the night and asked me if it was raining. I assured him that it was not."

"That's good," said Jim. "If it starts to thunder wake me up as I can't sleep in a thunderstorm."

Noel went on to remark that on several occasions he has told the story to friends in Duncan and Victoria. Their reaction was hard to define — something between disbelief and tolerance.

In his 93rd year, Jim was healthy, spry and with wits undulled. It was the Christmas dinner at the neighbors', the George Martins. Son-in-law Sam Martin eyes Jim's plate heaped to the brim. "That's a good plateful for a man of your age Jim." The reply was prompt and succinct, "I know I'm not very big — but I'm well hollowed out."

Jim is now living at Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie. His health is good and he still enjoys telling a good joke and always has an ear to listen to his friends and former neighbours.

#### HARRY DOUGLAS

Harry George Douglas hails from Farmingdale, Saskatchewan, north of Prince Albert. His father, Harry George Douglas came from Glasgow and married Mae Hadcroft in Winnipeg. At Farmingdale he trapped and farmed. He later farmed at Oak Bluff, 10 miles from Eaton's store, Winnipeg. His father died from exposure following a boating accident.

His mother then married Jim Blanco of Winnipeg, who moved to the Grande Prairie district in 1925 to farm. He homesteaded south of Saskatoon Mountain in 1930. After Harry's marriage in 1936 to Olive Martinson he farmed the Dick Hart place west of Beaverlodge. From there he farmed in Two Rivers, 1939 to 1953. Then he moved to Beaverlodge and is employed by the Town as Assistant Town Foreman.

There are four members of the Douglas family. Lorna married Barrie Rollins, now of Edmonton. Joan married Harold Hauger, Leonard married Darlene Pfau, now of Grande Prairie and James married Cindy Gwin, now of Grande Prairie.

The family still have a quarter in the Two Rivers district, north of Alf Perdues. Olive and Harry keep riding horses and both are still keen on trail rides to the Monkman Pass and other little frequented areas. Olive works for Wayne Howe, the druggist in Beaverlodge.



Coal mine and hoist. Red Willow River.

#### THE DRIGGS FAMILY

Melvin Driggs, father of the Driggs family chose to live by himself and homesteaded the NE 27-70-10-W6. There was a spring there with quite a high bank on the north side. He lived in a dug-out in this bank with poles and sod for a roof.

Clarence Driggs, his son had filed on NW 26-70-10-W6 but put most of his effort into building a cabin on the Red Willow river and mining coal there.

Ford McLure Driggs or Mac as we all knew him proved up the NW 35-70-10-W6. His mother and one sister Dolly lived with him. Dolly later married Jim Sinclair who lived several miles away, NW 9-71-10-W6. Mac was a real good neighbour and farmer. He built a good log cabin and barn, had nice horses and the best of cows. He built the best pole corrals in the district and was caretaker for the Registered Shorthorn government bull belonging to the Two Rivers Beef Club.

#### HARRIS BROTHERS

Born in London, England, Les and Rowe Harris arrived in Edmonton in the early part of April 1926, and worked out on nearby farms to raise a little money and pool their resources with the idea of starting on their own.

Les came north to Grande Prairie in November 1927 and secured a job for the winter with Percy Clubine, at the same time looking for land to purchase. A parcel which suited him was the N.W. 35-70-10-W6 and a down payment was made on the purchase, from Dr. Little of Grande Prairie.



In the spring Les purchased three horses and harness, a used walking plow, a six-foot single disk and staples such as a cook stove, wash tub, frying pan, buck saw and axe. With the help of neighbours he laid a new floor in the shack which had been demolished when a cow had fallen through into the cellar some years before.

It was the first week in June, '28 when Rowe arrived at the farm, and according to the neighbours this was the start of a 28 year argument; but in reality they had worked together for a common purpose since 1926. In 1956 when they separated, both had a high regard for the other's contribution to a successful partnership.

Perhaps it was the help of good neighbours, Art Lock and Les Longson with the loan of equipment that made things a lot easier in those first few years, because there was not one year, not even in the early thirties that they failed to make some financial progress. Then in 1932 they rented the Cliff Stacey place and this association was to bear the fruits of real success. Cliff had the scientific background, Les good business acumen and Rowe the ability to get things done. It all worked very well.

Les married Doris Irvine in 1934. Doris was a true partner, working hard to make the business a success and later becoming the third member of the partnership. In 1934 Cliff built the small house, barn and chicken house on his land and Les and Doris moved in following their wedding.

The youngest of the family, Humphrey, had joined the boys that same year but never seemed to take too kindly to farming, perhaps it was because he found himself usually doing the chores, washing clothes and dishes and doing the cooking. It was obvious to all that he didn't like cooking. He left for the west coast and during the war served in the Merchant Marine on both freighters and troop transports around the world. He is married now and works with the Meteorological Branch, D.O.T. in Victoria. Another brother, Peter and his wife Thirza and family Pat and Trevor came over later and were established on the Stubbs farm.

The production of forage seeds looked like a good way to supplement the income from wheat, oats and barley, so in the spring of '35 several varieties of forage were planted in rows including alfalfa, reed

canary grass, crested wheat grass, creeping red fescue, brome grass and one or two others. It was Humphrey's job to keep those five or six acres of row crop cultivated with a one horse scuffler and weeded by hand with hoe, so much hand weeding in fact that neighbours often asked him if he had found that nickel yet. To them the whole thing seemed such a waste of time.

Creeping red fescue was the crop chosen for seed production, but instead of growing it in three-foot rows as it always had been, 35 acres were seeded broadcast, and from there production expanded to the multi-million dollar crop the Peace Country produces every year.

A new tractor on rubber was purchased in the spring of 1940, when the old John Deere finally broke down. That fall Arnold Christie advanced them the down payment on a power binder and 28" separator, to be worked off by harvesting some of his crop. Later the one binder was found to be far too slow, so two eight-foot rubber mounted binders with trailer hitches were hooked behind the power binder, with Rowe driving the tractor, as that was the most fun, and Les riding the rear binder as he could yell the loudest.

At one time the partnership was farming 2,600 cultivated acres. Then in 1956 when Les and Rowe had growing sons to consider, the machinery was divided and the partnership dissolved, with each retaining a good viable unit. Those 30 years of cooperation it would seem, had resulted in a greater degree of success than could possibly have been obtained if each had tried to make it on his own.

#### LESLIE N. HARRIS

Leslie Harris will long be remembered for his service to farm organizations and his community. Soon after his arrival in Two Rivers he became secretary of the school board. He assisted in planning and building the hospital and community centre, then continued his support by working on the respective boards. Repeatedly he was an UFA delegate and he was a director of the Peace River Seed Growers and the Alberta Seed Growers. At CSGA conventions he was unique in that when the meeting might be worrying about the wording of a motion complicated by suggestions and counter suggestions from the floor, Les would put it into writing and almost immediately it would be accepted.

Les married Doris Irvine who had come to teach in the Two Rivers school in 1933. Doris was born in Calgary and later lived at Stavely. Her father, A. D. Irvine, of Scottish descent was born in the Annapolis Valley and his grandfather in turn was one of the first ship builders in the Maritimes. He came to Calgary in 1903 when sidewalks were a rarity. Doris's mother was



Grain cutting, using three binders behind a tractor. Harris Bros.

The first Peace River crop of fescue, on the McCarter place.

Cliff Stacey, Les and Rowe Harris.







Les Harris hauling grain.

Adeline Robertson of Iroquois, now under the St. Lawrence Seaway. She came to Calgary in 1902. The Irvines lived in retirement on the Harris farm for a time and moved on to Vancouver.

Joan, a daughter, married David Sereda an engineer and lives in Edmonton. They have two daughters. Neal is a graduate in Agriculture and Education and after teaching for several years is operating the home farm. His wife, the former Jean Johnson of Berwyn is vice-principal of the Elementary school, Beaverlodge.

Leslie and his brother Rowe made an intensive study of agriculture in the Peace and specialized in seed production in a large way. In 1965 Les accompanied Art Guitard and Cliff Stacey on an extensive trip across northern Europe to study agriculture there. When Les and Neal were farming together they were honoured by the Canadian Seed Growers' Association by being elected Robertson Associates.

Les and Doris eventually found Peace River winters rather severe so they spent several winters in Mexico. Les died on the home farm in 1971 and Doris moved to Edmonton, to apartment living.

#### EDWARD AND IDA HARROP

Ida Cumberland was born on a farm in Lisle in Simcoe County, Ontario in 1879, one of six children. Her family moved to Brampton where she grew up and received her education.

Edward Harrop was born December 8, 1877 in Georgetown, Ontario, also on a farm, where he and his seven brothers and three sisters grew up. Ed and Ida met at a social gathering in Brampton. Ida taught Sunday school and was active in social functions. She loved to paint and draw and she and her younger sister were accomplished elocutionists.

Ed brought his bride west to Lewvan, Saskatchewan where he had previously bought a farm and acquired a homestead. They raised pure-bred Jersey cattle and good horses, Percherons and Cleveland Bays. He always took a great deal of pride in his livestock. They had three children, Christine Mary, Franklin Cumberland, and Edward McDougald. All were born in Regina. The Harrop family moved to Yorkton, Saskatchewan and farmed there for a few years and Christine started school there. Ed used to show his cattle and horses at Yorkton, Regina, Melville and Brandon. Ida often showed butter, fancy work and baking. The family moved around to several other places in Saskatchewan including Balcarres, where Christine first started showing her pony, both under saddle and in harness classes. In July 1928 they

moved to the Two Rivers district. Here the children grew up and finished school.

During the 1930's there never was very much money but everyone in the community joined in to make their own fun. During the summer they had community picnics and ball games, sometimes in the school grounds, sometimes at the old ford on the Beaverlodge river. In the winter they had skating parties and tobogganing and card parties in either the school house or in someone's home. Ted and Frank loved to go hunting across the Wapiti with some of the other neighbors.

Ed grew certified Victory seed oats. In 1933 he prepared a sample of brome seed and sent it to the World's Fair at Regina where it won first prize and locally he was referred to as the "Hayseed King." He also grew wonderful gardens containing both flowers and vegetables. The Harrops root cellar was a place to remember. Built into the side of the river bank it was lined with shelves for pumpkins, cabbages, and marrows, and bins for root crops. The cellar had a double roof and double doors for insulation. Vegetables kept crisp and fresh all winter. Everyone had to help with the work.

Harrops were always active in community functions, church, U.F.A. and Seed Growers.

Christine met and married Clayton Leroy (Roy) Horton in 1938. They farmed in the Two Rivers district for awhile and then moved to Dawson Creek, B.C. for two years, then to Westlock where Roy was a mechanic. They had two girls, Ida and Lynn.

Ed passed away in 1938 at age of 61 years and was buried in the Halcourt cemetery. Frank and his mother stayed on the farm for several years and then Ida went to Westlock and stayed with Roy and Christine for a year. Then she went to Pincher Creek and lived with her widowed brother for a year or so. He passed away and she returned to live with Christine and Roy until her death in 1964 at the age of 84 years. Frank never married, he still has the home farm. Ted joined the Navy for a few years. When he came back he bought the Bernard farm near Beaverlodge and married Martha Hartman. They farmed for a while, then Martha moved to Beaverlodge and Ted went out on construction work. They had one daughter, Sandra Ruth born May 7, 1956.

#### GUNNER HELBERG

Gunner Helberg was a very friendly bachelor. Neighbors were always welcome in his warm little log cabin. One thing that interested me was the way he made his bread. Whenever you dropped in, you could nearly always bet on having a slice of real good, freshly baked bread.

He always had a pot of what he called sour dough batter hanging on a ridge log. When it was time to make more bread he would reach up, cut off a small piece of dough which acted as the yeast and proceed to make his bread. To keep the pot full he just added a little more water, flour and sugar each time.

The bread dough may have been plentiful, but like most homesteaders the money was not. Hence Gunner wrote a letter home suggesting that financial assistance would be appreciated.

The reply came back: "Son, read your Bible".

Good advice, but would it satisfy creditors? Times did not improve hence a second and third letter was dispatched, each with the same reply. Finally in some desperation Gunner did turn to his Bible — and found therein several bills of the realm tucked neatly away.

Does history repeat itself? Consider William Quincy Adams carrying his Bible, a gift of his mother through World War I and the times when on leave he could have used a \$20 bill to advantage. For details, consult son George Quincy Adams.

#### MR. AND MRS. ALTON D. IRVINE

The Irvines, parents of Doris Harris came to stay on the Harris' farm for a while and later retired to Vancouver, where they died.

They were both of Scottish parentage. Mr. Irvine's great-grandfather was one of the early ship builders in Canada. They settled in Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia. He died of typhoid on a return journey to Canada. Alton came to Calgary in 1903 and was in real estate and insurance there when sidewalks were a rarity. He married Adeline Robertson of Calgary, who came there in 1902. She was secretary to the Editor of the old Farm and Ranch Review. They were married in 1910 and went to Stavely where they had a general store. This they sold in 1925 and moved back to Calgary, again in insurance business. They then moved to Medicine Hat in 1929, where they lived until they came to Beaverlodge.

#### REX IRELAND

When coming into the country Rex Ireland found it was cheaper to travel in the company of livestock than to pay the regular passenger fare. He bought a stallion for \$85 at Swift Current and traveled into the Peace in its charge. Then he traded the stallion at the Horse Lake Reserve for 22 horses making himself a handsome start in the horse trading business.

When wanting homesteads, Rex and two other men were scouting around the Rio Grande area looking for land that would please them. Disgruntled they returned to Eugene Probst's place to rest. Probst asked Rex, "Just what are you looking for?" Rex replied that he'd like a quarter just like Probsts — a nice gentle slope to the east — not too much brush, good soil. Probst knew just the place — a quarter mile east of his land and across the road — now known as the Harrop land. So Rex filed in 1916 and became one of Two Rivers early homesteaders. His neighbors said — "he had a nice home and family, was a good neighbor and a good farmer." But it wasn't his family or his home that most people remember about Rex — he was a horse trader — he was even said to have traded a man out of a team of horses for a sheepskin coat. And the horses he traded weren't always what they appeared to be either. One neighbor bought a team and hooked them to his buggy. Before he'd gone a mile one horse had put its hind leg through the wheel. The leg was badly broken and the horse had to be shot. Rex also raised mules and was the only homesteader in the district with a 'real' jackass.

Rex married Miss Tine Rodehouse, sister to Ernie Rae's wife and their oldest son Reg was born at

Hughenden. He moved to Beaverlodge sometime before 1920 and by this time two more boys Lloyd (Bud) and Earl had joined the family. At Beaverlodge he operated a livery barn — with Harry Bennington running it while Rex managed the feed end and continued his horse trading. One rarely beat Rex at a deal so Bennington probably wasn't surprised when he lost his homestead at Lower Beaverlodge to Rex for the feed bill.

Rex moved his operation and family to Wembley in 1925 and returned to Beaverlodge in 1929 where he built a large modern home and continued in the livery barn service. Unfortunately a fire destroyed this barn but Rex was able to rebuild.

From Beaverlodge he went to Clairmont in 1934 where he had bought the hotel and continued his horse dealing. He was back into the livery stable business until 1942 from 1938 but again this barn was destroyed by fire. From 1942 he was involved with a racing stable at the Edmonton Exhibition grounds and again in 1960 his demon fire destroyed not only the stables but the racing horses and even Rex himself.

His wife, Tine still lives in Edmonton. She is now 81 years young. She keeps herself young with travelling and doing her own shopping with no intention of taking time out to grow old. "Bud" said he'd like us to record the berry picking excursions that his mother used to organize. With a team of mules and a democrat she'd take the family to Lake Saskatoon for saskatoons for the winter supply — a memorable incident in a little boy's life.

Their oldest son, Reg married Una Dickson of Clairmont. They have four children and Reg is following in his father's footsteps by racing horses in Phoenix, Arizona.

Lloyd (Bud) the second son has made a career of grain buying and is now buying grain in the U.G.G. elevator at Wembley. He and his wife Eva (Conley) live in Grande Prairie and they have one married daughter and two sons.

Earl, the youngest son, as a Flight Lieutenant was killed in the last World War over the Atlantic Ocean February 1945.

#### OLE LARSON

Weird tales were told of Ole Larson, a Norwegian bachelor who had three of the best quarters of farm land in the Two Rivers district. He was a very good carpenter and his neighbors claimed he could cut a rafter to a perfect fit. His fences, some of which are still standing since as early as 1913, were straight and strong.

He was reported to be a tremendously strong man and on one occasion was supposed to have carried a new stove on his back all the way from Wembley. Big boned and heavily muscled, he carried 100 pounds of flour from Kranz store with a sack of oatmeal on top for good measure.

He built himself a neat little cabin but there the neatness may have ended. About his person and his food there was definitely an "off" flavour. He was never known to take a bath or change his clothes — he just added another layer. He killed coyotes for food and threw them under the bed to freeze — cutting off a



chunk when he desired meat. One of his favorite dishes was sour milk curd to which he added blood, making a hard packed cheese that he could slice.

Ole died alone in his cabin.

### JOHN LEE

John Lee was the original homesteader on the land east of where Eugene Probst presently resides.

Homesteaders were a hardy lot who usually kept their affairs to themselves, but when a fire which escaped from Ole Larsen burned John Lee's shack, Ole did not have the money to pay the fine. So neighbour John Lee paid it for him. John also wrote letters to persons in the United States for Ole requesting payment of money owed him. The report through the district was that while Ole did collect some money, John was not paid for his services. Such was life on the homestead.

John drifted over to Peace River and helped build some of the boats which plied the river. He is reported to have put a raft in the river there and started downstream. He was never heard of again.

### MRS. MARY LEWIS

One of the more colorful persons of the Two Rivers district was Mary Lewis, who with her father, Mr. Fraser, and three teenage sons came there about 1911 or 1912.

They came in over the Edson Trail and one report has it that she lost her dentures on Break Neck Hill. She was supposed to be unable financially to replace them but that is doubtful as she bought her son Quincy a 10-20 Titan tractor, one of the first tractors in the region. One neighbour recalls that the boys even took the tractor out to the lake in the winter to haul their ice. They would spend hours getting it fired up for winter jobs rather than use their horses.

The boys did a lot of breaking the year they got the tractor and had a tremendous crop of oats off the breaking — 110 bushels to the acre and the price of \$.45 per bushel was considered very good. Quincy hauled the oats to Grande Prairie, using Clive Ireland's stopping place. Then he would go home for more oats to get money for groceries.

Grandfather Fraser had a cabin about 100 yards from his daughter's house. He was half blind and the teenage boys, full of pranks are reported tricking Grandpa into chasing "cows out of his garden" when all the time it was the boys with sheets over them.

Mr. Fraser died here and was buried in the Halcourt cemetery.

Another story concerns Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Dan Chambers walking the five miles to a Ladies' Aid meeting at the Halcourt church. They were leading an ox in case there was a mud hole to cross. There was a mud-hole and Jim Dixon happened along as the women

Breaking new land. Ethel Lock on Quincy Lewis' Titan tractor.



Mrs. Lewis and Quincy.

were trying to mount the ox. It is debatable whether the women or Jim were the more embarrassed. Skirts were never worn above the knees then.

Mrs. Lewis got the notion at one time that she didn't want Lawrence Lock to haul water past her place so she fenced off the road-allowance. Lawrence took the fence down and went on hauling water which incensed Mrs. Lewis. She stormed out to him, "I'm an inside Devil and an outside Angel, but it's the inside Devil I'm giving you now."

Mrs. Lewis was known to set her cap for all likely bachelors in the district but they all managed to withstand her charms. Automatic Campbell used to look with longing eyes in her direction though. He'd sigh, "Think of all the 'taties them boys could pick."

The Lewis moved to the coast about 1923 where the boys all took good jobs. Mrs. Lewis and one of the boys are known to have died.

### ARTHUR SAMUEL LOCK

Art Lock was born in Brocton, N.W., U.S.A. in 1899. The family started for the "Peace" in 1914 but stopped off in Edmonton and lived and worked around Cooking Lake, Glen Garden area.

Art came to Beaverlodge in February 1917, at 17 years of age to look at the country. In July he moved his mother, younger brother Lawrence and sister Ethel up to his great uncle Joe Bateman's, one half mile east of the Halcourt United Church. The father Henry Lock was away in the Army overseas. Art filed on a homestead, N.W. 1-71-10-W6 by proxy for his father. Later he took over this land as his own.

After a stay in a tent at Uncle Joe's, Art moved the family to their new home. He homesteaded the N.W. 15-71-11-W6 in the Leighmore district and did farming for his dad who had been crippled in the army. Brother Lawrence moved out on his own. In late 20's Art filed on a second homestead S.W. 25-70-10-W6, which he still farms.

A little cash was scrounged in early days by hauling



coal to Grande Prairie. He went to the mine on the Red Willow, pulled up coal from the mine in a barrel and dumped it into sleighs. The following day he would drive to Grande Prairie and would return the third day. He carried lunches and horse feed and used some of the stopping places along the road. The parents, Henry and Annie Lock moved to their soldier's grant on the Beaverlodge river in late '20's.

Art married Olive Goldsmith January 1, 1930. They were the first couple married in the Bentum United Church by the Rev. A. V. Bentum. Art's sister Ethel was married to Jim Rutledge by Rev. Simmons of Wembley and both couples went back to the home of the Lock parents for a reception and supper. The following day Art and Olive started for Beaverlodge to take the train for a honeymoon trip to Edmonton. After trouble with the Essex car in snow drifts they reached the crossing south of town just as the train went by and so missed their trip.

Art and Olive's first home of logs still stands at the old homesite. One vivid memory of Olive's first years on the farm was the one evening when the wind blew the roof off the house and sailed it out towards a slough east of the house.

The Art Lock family are: Allan, married to Elsie Farnquist, is employed at the Research Station and still farms; Betty is married to Dalton Longson and they have ten children and one grandchild; Norman passed away in 1947 in a drowning accident in the Red Willow river when he was 14 years old; Margaret married Wright Bradshaw and they had three children, Brian, the eldest, was killed when two years old; Ronald married Kathleen Watyshyn, they have three children and live in Grande Prairie.

Art joined the army in 1941 where he served until the end of the war. He is still actively farming and celebrated his 75th birthday April 25, 1974.



Fred Dixon and Art Lock hunting on the Wapiti.

## HENRY LOCK

As a young man, Henry Lock was in the militia in England. He was even on sentry duty at Buckingham Palace, in busby attire. He came to Canada about 1892 and became an estate gardener at Hamilton, Ontario. He was in the militia which repulsed the American invasion in Hamilton Bay.

He married Annie Rowe of Hamilton and soon thereafter accepted a job as caretaker of a cemetery at Portland, New York. His son, Lawrence remembers

all the different nationalities who came there to bury their dead and the odd customs and rituals that went with their burials. In 1896 Henry Lock moved to New York State and had his own greenhouse and fruit farm. He grew such crops as grapes, peaches, plums and tomatoes.

In 1913 the family moved to Edmonton and bought land at Ardrossan.

In 1914, and at age 45, Henry enlisted in World War I. There he was badly injured and after the war, spent several years in the hospital.

Ardrossan did not seem to be home to Henry so he sent his son, Art, to the Peace in the fall of 1916, to stay with his uncle, Joe Bateman, while Henry looked over the country. Finally a carload of settlers' effects was loaded and the family settled on the N.W. 1-71-10-W6, the Rosey Brown place, in 1918. Henry never worked on the land. The boys did the farming.

Henry was able to do some shop and woodwork. His second homestead and soldier grant, now owned by Walter Willis, was east of the Lawrence Lock farm.

Henry's health continued to deteriorate and Lawrence recalls that in the last years his father was at home, he was carried farther than he walked. Henry finally went to the Veterans' Hospital in Edmonton and died there in 1950, two or three years after Mrs. Lock's passing.

There were three in the family, all born in New York State. Art married Olive Goldsmith, Lawrence married Jean Ray and Ethel married James Rutledge.

The boys continued to live and farm in the Two Rivers district. The Rutledges farmed near Wanham and retired to Grande Prairie.

## THE LAWRENCE LOCK STORY

Lawrence Lock, pioneer and farmer of the Two Rivers district was born in Brocton, New York State in 1901 and came to Canada with his parents in 1913.

They lived at Ardrossan, Alberta for a short time and then moved to the Two Rivers district in the spring of 1917. They lived with Uncle Joe Bateman until their father, Henry Lock returned home from World War I in 1918.

One of his early farming experiences was working for Gordon Sherk, spike pitching on the Bull Outfit and driving their oxen. Later on he worked for Fred Dixon and Charlie McNaught.

One spring when Lawrence was seeding for Charlie McNaught, he noticed Alex Ray's "little chick" Jean coming for their cows each evening. Jean had arrived in the Halcourt area with her parents in 1911. Lawrence began feeding the cows some of McNaught's seed oats, so Jean would have to come at least within waving distance. Gradually Lawrence found he was helping Jean take the cows home, finally he was calling in to see her "brothers".

Lawrence's memory takes him back to a beautiful moonlight night in September, 1919 when he rode a horse bareback almost all that night, 30 miles to be in Grande Prairie for Land Office opening in the morning. He cancelled A. Johnson on the N.W. 30-70-9-W6 the day this land was thrown open for filing. Successfully completing this transaction he built his first log cabin in 1921. It had hewn poles for a floor and



a sod roof where the prairie chickens came each morning and scratched dirt in his face to wake him up.

When he was breaking his first 15 acres with horses the mosquitoes were so thick he had to carry a smudge pot on the handles of the plow. He became interested in Indian artifacts when his plow turned up arrow heads, a buffalo head and an Indian stone axe.

Lawrence hauled coal from the Red Willow mines to Grande Prairie, making two trips a week, weather permitting. After paying for coal, livery barn and meals he had \$5.00 a trip left from a two-ton load. It took all one winter to buy an engagement ring.

In 1925, Jean and Lawrence were married. They then purchased the N.E. 25-70-10-W6. They cleared their first 200 acres by hand with grub hoe and axe, using dynamite for the large stumps. In 1931, they started growing Registered Victory oats.

In those days they ground their own porridge, had their own eggs, butter, milk, cream and vegetables. Their meat consisted mostly of moose, deer, prairie chicken and partridge along with the odd rabbit. Each fall Jean canned approximately 150 jars of wild strawberries, raspberries, saskatoons, cranberries and rhubarb. They cured their own meat and canned some for use.

Lawrence hauled water from the Beaverlodge river for their stock and mined coal on the Beaverlodge river for their own use.

One Monday morning, four years after their wedding they started on a delayed honeymoon to the Edmonton Exhibition in a 1921 Model T Ford and with \$50.00 cash.

They ran into rain at Richmond Hill and it rained almost continuously for the entire journey. Thus the Dunvegan Hill was muddy and the truck didn't have enough power to get up the hill off the ferry so Jean spent the afternoon riding back and forth on the ferry while Lawrence ground the valves.

They were five days on the road and Lawrence proudly recalls that they always caught up with and passed the big cars stuck in the mud. They arrived in Edmonton where the Model T decided to stop on a street car track. After pushing it off the track and giving it another tune up they proceeded to the Exhibition where Lawrence asked a policeman where he could park the truck. He replied "Park it where you like! Nobody would take it anyway!" After seeing the last afternoon of the Exhibition they proceeded back home.

Lawrence has been active in the development of the Two Rivers district. He served for some years on school, telephone, rural electrification, and Peace River Seed Growers' boards. He maintained the Two Rivers main road for 25 years as well as threshing for neighbours in this area for 30 years.

Lawrence enlisted in World War II as a mechanic but was injured and transferred to the Military Police, serving there for three years.

The last seven years Lawrence has worked for the Alberta Forest Service in the Grande Prairie Division on a fire look-out tower. Jean and Lawrence enjoyed the summer months they spent in the mountains.

Doreen was born to the Locks in 1933 and Kenneth in 1937. Doreen married Melvin Longson and they farm nearby. They have three children — Linda, Wayne and

Mary Ann. Kenneth married Gloria Hotte. They have four children — Debby, Tammy, Troy and Darren.

When Ken started farming with his dad in 1954, with emphasis on seed production they advanced to Elite and Breeders' seed with the growing of Aurora alsike, Boreal fescue, Noralta flax, Torch rape, Climax timothy, Castor Reed canary grass, Gateway barley and Rodney oats.

In 1969 Lawrence and Ken were each presented with the Outstanding Service Award from the Alberta Branch of Canadian Seed Growers' Association.

Ken has now taken over the farm and Lawrence has retired at the age of 72 years. He hopes to have more time to spend on his three hobbies: building up his campsite on the Red Willow river, camping, and travelling.

Lawrence recalls how upset he was when he called at the bank for his \$20, then due to each citizen as his share of the Provincial Oil Royalty. His parents were Canadian and had never taken out citizenship papers in U.S.A. Lawrence was born in the U.S.A. so the bank claimed he was not a Canadian citizen and he was denied the \$20. Lawrence wrote a letter to the Government telling them he hadn't realized until now that he was an alien or a foreigner. He had proved up two homesteads, served three years in World War II and had voted for years. He told them if they needed the Royalty worse than he did they could keep it. Next mail he got his \$20.

He also recalls that in the spring of 1966 he decided to try his hand on a Grande Prairie Forestry Tower. First he had to go to school at Hinton, to the Alberta Forestry School. When it came time to write exams for aeronautic telephones the examiner would not let him write unless he had Canadian citizenship papers. He asked Lawrence to go to town, pay \$10.00 to make application for citizenship, and show him the receipt. Not using the nicest words Lawrence told the examiner where he could go. He said if he wasn't already a Canadian citizen he was never going to be and added "I suppose if I had been born in Canada of spy parents from Russia I could have written my exam!"

This really perturbed him so he made the rounds of Grande Prairie lawyers without success. Then in desperation he sought out the Court House and found a kindly man who would listen. This man had his clerk produce the required papers and Lawrence was sent



Lawrence Lock.





Lawrence Lock and Jim Rutledge mining coal on the Beaverlodge river.

home to fill them out. Again he became frustrated and again his mentor at the Court House aided him. One more stipulation was needed, a dollar bill to pay the fee but here Lawrence balked again and showed his helper the section which said that this was not required of war veterans. Lawrence then went to the Department of Transport and wrote his exams.

Lawrence's aides at the Court House were no other than the District Judge and the Clerk of Court! Lawrence now has dual citizenship.

#### DAVID AND HELEN MAGARRELL — by Helen Magarrell

David Magarrell of Irish parentage came with his parents to the Lethbridge area from Inkster, North Dakota. Helen's parents, of Yugoslavian descent came to Cardston. Her father worked in the mine at Harrisville, near Cardston.

David came to the Peace River country in 1924 from Chinook, Alberta where everything was dried out year after year. He filed on a quarter section in the Two Rivers district. The first time he saw his quarter it was half under water and after the water receded half the quarter was slough and swamp. When the water dried up he had to haul water for the house and stock and in the winter time, melted ice or snow.

His first building was of logs with a sod roof. Part of it was partitioned off for his living quarters. In 1930 we were married. Before this he had built a log house.

Clearing land was quite a problem as it all had to be done by an axe and a strong back. The land was broken with a walking plough and a team of horses. Fuel for the winter was also a problem, each farmer cutting a year's supply of trees each fall. 1930 to 1937 were the dirty thirties and pretty skimpy. We had one cow and a few chickens. There was not much money for any luxuries and jobs were very few but everyone was in the same boat. Neighbours were few and far apart. If we had good crops they were not worth much. We had



Lawrence Lock's wood cutting bee.



drought, hail and frost to contend with but we survived.

People remember Dave Magarrell driving a two-wheeled cart to town with rear view mirrors on it.

In 1960 when my husband's health gave out, we sold out and moved to Beaverlodge where Dave passed away in 1966.

We raised two sons, Rodney David and Nickolas but neither like farm life. They are both on their own. Rodney is with an oil company in Arabia.

I recall that we had no roads in winter time and they were always drifted in for six months. The only way we could get out was to walk in to town with a back-pack for the few things we needed and for the mail. Those were the days one will always remember. I live in Beaverlodge now.

### DONALD McNAB

Don McNab came to the Two Rivers district in 1928 with his wife Olive and two young daughters, Helen and Jean. Prior to their emigration to Ontario in 1851, the McNabs lived at Eaglesfield near Glasgow, Scotland. In 1878 Don's father, Peter, moved to Manitoba to farm. It was here at Neepawa that Donald was born in 1896.

After his schooling, Don too turned to farming and farmed at Neepawa for seven years. During that time he married Olive Hall in 1922. Don recalls they had only lived 15 miles apart but the isolation of communities in those days meant they rarely met except at church events and dances. He and Olive attended the same church, and became members the same day.

Olive Hall was of Scottish (Hall) and Irish (Green) descent and was also born at Neepawa. At eighteen she began teaching school. Her first school was a class of fifty-two who had put three previous teachers to rout. To augment her teacher's salary she played "mood" music for the silent films at the local theatre. Tired of teaching, she worked in a bank for four years moving up from teller to accountant.

In the fall of 1927 Don came to Beaverlodge and bought land from George Harris. The next spring he brought his family and effects only to find Harris had changed his mind about selling. So Don bought the Ernie Rae land in the Two Rivers district. The house had been used for a granary and a hotel for mice. Their first night there the McNabs trapped sixty mice.

About those early days Don recalls how welcome were their first visitors, Jean and Lawrence Lock. He remembers the first Christmas Concert they attended, where he and Pearl Longson contracted small-pox — although he had had three vaccinations for it. Don and Lawrence Lock were the unofficial barbers in the district and he grins about the snip he once took out of Rowe Harris' ear.

During those first hard years on the farm, Don, for ten consecutive winters, took a portable wood sawing and grain grinding machine about the countryside. He laughs about the time he lifted a log to the apron and found he had lifted two men with it. Then there was the time the men had the laugh on him. He stopped the outfit while he searched for his pipe — which was in his mouth all the time. These enterprises were not very profitable as his net return was about fifteen dollars



Jim McNab.

per month — the exact amount he had to pay a man to do his chores at home. With several of his neighbours he shared a threshing machine. During the depression years Don served as separator man at twenty-seven cents per hour.

Don McNab had another avocation — water witching. His ability to divine water with a willow wand or heavy piece of wire put him in good stead with his neighbours. Ironically he could never get a good well on his own place or for his immediate neighbours. The aquifers were there but a peculiar black sand always silted them closed.

As a farmer Don McNab has done his share of raising hogs and registered cattle and growing pedigreed seed. He is proud of his thirty-five years of growing field inspected seed — elite Olli barley and several other varieties of oats and barley. Sixty per cent of his grain he sold for seed — truly an outstanding record. In 1968 Don and Jim received the coveted Robertson Association Award, the highest honor paid by the



Canadian Seed Growers' Association. He farmed in partnership with his son Jim, born in 1933, from 1950 to 1969, when Jim decided to go into dentistry.

Besides being a good farmer — Don McNab is also a good community citizen working on the executives of the U.F.A., the Rural Telephone Company, the South Beaverlodge Rural Electrification Association, and as a member of the Board of Stewards of both the Halcourt and Beaverlodge United Churches. Olive served as secretary for the Telephone Company, church organist, community piano teacher and even school teacher supply when needed. For fun, Don and son Jim both curled, Don starting as early as 1938 when the first rink was constructed at Halcourt.

All three of the McNab children took their grade school at Two Rivers and Beaverlodge. When the girls were ready for high school their grandmother Hall took a house in Beaverlodge, and cared for them as well as the Heller girls. Olive died in 1966.

Helen, currently teaching in Wembley, is married to Harry Taylor and helps him with a Jersey herd. They have three children — Donna who is also teaching school; Lynne working for Alberta Power in Edmonton and taking night classes in chartered accounting; and Craig who is at university taking courses to fit him to become a Provincial Parks Director.

Jean married Ken Buckner, a body mechanic with Wapiti Motors in Grande Prairie. They have six children, Hal at N.A.I.T. taking a chef's course, the other five — including a pair of twins — are still in Grande Prairie schools, Jean works at A.G.T.

Jim married Pat Sheppard, a New Brunswick nurse. They live in Edmonton, where Jim is one year away from finishing his dentistry course. They have two children — Caroline and Jonathan — both in grade school.

Don says — at seventy-eight — that it is time to quit farming, as he has always promised himself some fishing and travelling.

#### **WILLIAM PERDUE**

Bill came about 1928 and married Mrs. Nattie Adams, who had a son, Jasper. They had one son, Mickey. He hauled coal from the Red Willow mines to Beaverlodge for a good many winters.

He had a top notch threshing crew which earned a bonus of a case of beer whenever they put 3000 bushels of oats through the separator in a day.

Bill and his brothers each had a part in the outfit. Alf put his tractor into it, and supplied the humour. Pete supplied the separator while Bill "hustled" the whole crew.

While threshing at his brother's place, Alf spied a platter of two dozen eggs that had not been served. Alf ate them all to the chagrin of the crew which had gone without.

Bill and his wife later retired to live in Calgary.

#### **JOE PRICHARD**

Joe Prichard was a native of Czechoslovakia and owned a coal mine near Edmonton, where he spent most of his time. In 1914 he came to the Peace River country with Mike Beddis and filed on land in the Two Rivers district.

Being a miner, he was used to handling dynamite and thought this would be an easy way to get rid of the stumps on his land. One day he had some dynamite caps in his pocket and absent mindedly put a cigarette stub into his pocket. Then his mind registered an alarm and in a flash he tried to get the caps and stub out of his pocket. He got them out but the dynamite blew his hand off before he was able to let go.

Joe just spent part of his time here. He hired his breaking and clearing done, enough to prove up his land. He had a nice cabin built too. Old neighbors recall him as a "good-hearted fellow" who didn't take much part in community affairs.

#### **THE PROBST STORY**

Eugene Probst of the Two Rivers district is a charming man from Switzerland. It was delightful to visit with him. He's 83 years old, in good health and has a keen mind and a witty tongue. Kindly stories poured from his reservoir of memories. "You should write a book!", we said as our amazement grew over his fund of memories.

It seems that Eugene was born in Bienne, Switzerland in 1891. When he came to Canada in 1910, he worked on a farm at Duck Lake, Saskatchewan for a while, moved on to British Columbia, then back to Alberta and into the Peace by 1913.

He told us how he had walked the Edson Trail three times between 1913 and 1915, going out to get paying jobs in the summer and coming back in the winter to prove up the homestead he'd taken at Two Rivers. He hired his first breaking done.

On his first trip in he wasn't in very good condition so he'd walk a while, then he would lie down until his ankles were rested and he would get cold. Then he'd hobble on a while and repeat the rest and walk process until he finally reached a stopping place north of Edson.

The mention of this stopping place reminded Eugene that he had met a Beaverlodge man there — one Bill Bernard who was also walking in but Bernard was pulling a hand sleigh with two valises on it. Ten years later Bernard told Eugene that the valises were loaded with whiskey he was taking in for sale.

One trip Eugene took sick and urged his companions to go ahead. But one kindly Norwegian refused to leave him alone and waited with him until the mailman came by and took Eugene on to the next stopping place.

In 1915 he walked out over the Edson Trail but this time he came back via Grizzly Bear, now Eaglesham and the Emerson Trail, feeling at home again when he reached Lake Saskatoon. He recalls he had only two pair of socks so he had one pair slung over his shoulder to dry as he trudged along.

In July 1916, he decided to join up and arranged with a neighbour to take off his crop for half the oats and to farm his land until he returned. Instead of walking out he went down the Smoky river by boat to Watino — walked over to McLennan and boarded the E.D. and B.C. En route to Edmonton the locomotive lost a crank shaft and the train went on to Edmonton non-stop, just slowed down at stations for passengers, as it feared if it stopped with the remaining shaft on



dead centre, it wouldn't start again. The cheapest way to travel was by "riding the rods" but the officious brakeman was collecting tolls so after two stations Eugene decided it was cheaper to buy a ticket. Harry Brown of Rio Grande, also a "rod-rider" was sure they could bluff the brakeman, but not Eugene.

In Edmonton Eugene found that enlisting men were entitled to a fare refund if they could produce a receipt. He plodded back out to the railroad yards, got his receipt, then tried to collect. He was told that the extra money was being retained to support the band!

On release from the Army, Eugene wanted to claim the Canadian citizenship papers to which he was entitled for having served in the army. As they were not forthcoming, he went before a Citizenship judge in Grande Prairie. The judge discovered Eugene was proficient in both German and French languages so the rest of his hearing was conducted in French. Eugene says he improved his English by reading the encyclopedia!

Settled again at Two Rivers Eugene built a big barn even though his neighbours thought he was crazy. He didn't have any livestock but he intended to have some so he put care and workmanship into a sturdy edifice. Then he began buying and breeding Clydesdale horses of which he was so proud. He also, like Ernie Rae tried some cows but found the slough hay was not sufficiently nutritious and the cows would lose strength, get down and were unable to get up again. In 1929 he traded five of his horses and \$800.00 for a Hart Parr tractor.

The story of the Probst courtship and marriage is unique. It seems Mrs. Art Schaffter of Beaverlodge had been keeping in touch with her Swiss folks and had heard of a young girl who was alone in the world. Mrs. Schaffter told Eugene about her and Eugene started to write to Miss Lachat. Then he was sending her pictures of himself and of his big barn and of his lovely Clydesdale horses. Finally Edith Ella Lachat of Bienne, Switzerland arrived at Beaverlodge to visit the Schaffters — with the intention, so she said, of joining a friend in Chicago afterwards. Eugene lost no time in making her acquaintance. When Edith decided it was time to go to Chicago, Eugene said, "Why don't you marry me and stay here? You don't want to go to

Chicago where you don't know anyone!" They were married in May 1930.

Gene laughed about the way he and Ernie Rae mined coal one winter. They borrowed Mrs. Ryan's piano box and stripped the seam of coal on top of the bank of the Red Willow. To get near enough to load their sleighs they had to come in on the river below the seam. They greased a slide with rancid butter, bought at Funnell's store for 5 cents per pound, loaded the piano box with coal and slid it down the bank to their waiting sleighs — two boxes made a load. It was an ingenious but economical way of getting winter fuel.

After their first child, Dolores, was born Mrs. Probst developed an ulcer and had to have a milk diet. Gene traded Art Mounce a horse for a cow and a pig. The sow had a litter of ten young ones. When fully grown the sale of ten pigs only brought him \$15.00. He never went into raising pigs!

Times were hardest in 1932 when he sold good seed oats at 10 cents per bushel and his credit was no good at the stores in Wembley. He needed \$2.00 worth of medicine at the drug store and was told, "You can surely find \$2.00!"

Like his neighbours, Eugene seeded creeping red fescue. When he had a good stand a buyer offered him \$10,000 cash as it stood that day. Eugene had heard it would be 60 cents per pound and his yield was good so he turned it down. The next day he was hailed out. That was a "heart break he had to learn to live with!"

The Probst had four children. When Mrs. Don McNab was teaching the Two Rivers school she asked her pupils to write what they would like to be when they grew up. Raymond was not in doubt: he would be a geologist, now he is a geologist, his special work is a seismologist for a major oil company. He married Mary Schultz. Kathleen married Lyle Abbott, a supervisor at Belmont Centre in Edmonton. Dolores married Robert Blimke who works for Canfor at Grande Prairie, and Orville married Marlene Sandboe of La Glace and they took over the family farm on Gene's retirement.

Eugene wants nothing more of life than to be allowed to stay on his beloved acres in the Two Rivers district.

## THE RAE FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. John Hope Rae and their sons Ernie, Charlie and Jay came to the Two Rivers district from Winnipeg in 1916. John filed on the school quarter and Ernie, the next one east. Neither Charlie nor Jay were old enough to file so got theirs by proxy. Charlie and Ernie did the lion's share of the brushing and breaking. They bought logs and built a house on Ernie's homestead where they lived. The house still stands in excellent repair on Don McNab's land. Ernie married Miss Rodehouse, Mrs. Rex Ireland's sister and they had three sons.

Ernie bought cows with the intention of starting a dairy herd. This operation was fated for disaster as hard times and poor feed caused the death of several cows. He decided farming didn't pay and moved to Grande Prairie where he worked for the ED & BC and J. B. Oliver. Then transferred to Chemanius, B.C. where he died of pneumonia.



Eugene Probst



John built a frame house on SE 1-71-10 and had good intentions of digging a well but he dug a hole eight feet square to start with and it took a lot of digging to get very deep. He finally abandoned the attempt and the hole is still a mute testimony to his vain efforts. No one seems to know when he died after they had left the district. Later Mrs. Rae remarried; she returned as Mrs. Ryan with their three daughters. They weren't too happy on the land so went back to Winnipeg where she cared for Jay. Jay had gone off to war and returned a shell-shock victim. Later neighbors heard Mrs. Ryan, Charlie, Jay and the three girls had moved to Vancouver. The land was sold for taxes to Don Chambers and now Alan Lock owns it. Lawrence Lock has Jay's quarter and Jim Watson has Charlie's land.

#### JACK SKOLSEG

Jack hired on with a ballast crew of the E.D. and B.C. prior to 1919 and was sent to Grande Prairie. He filed on the quarter of land west of Art Chapman. In the winter of 1919-20, Steve Craig wintered his herd of 400 Aberdeen cattle there.

The first political meeting of the district, prior to the election of Herbert Greenfield's U.F.A. government, was held at his place. It was a gala affair, with Dan horse racing and a giant picnic. Lawrence Lock recalls that Jack had a basketball court at his place and that the Halcourt and Appleton teams met there for summer games.

#### MURRIT WHISLER

Murrit Whisler was an auctioneer who came to the Two Rivers district from the United States in 1916, with his wife and daughter. He cancelled the land John Lee had left. Mrs. Whisler was a school teacher and taught at Cariboo school west of Rio Grande.

The Whislars built a frame house and broke 60 acres of land. In 1919, during the influenza epidemic, Mrs. Whisler died. Murrit and his daughter returned to the States where he remarried. This lady was also a school teacher who taught high school in Phoenix, Arizona. They returned here but found that the life didn't suit them so they went back to Oregon. After their death, the daughter sold the land to Eugene Probst.

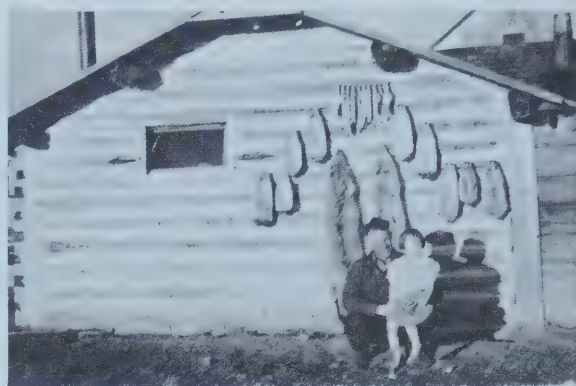
#### C. WALTER WILLIS

"Uncle Walter" admits that his correct name is C. C. Walter Willis. It is slightly complicated since one "C" stands for "Charles" and Walter has a brother Charles. The other "C" is short for Castlar, his grandfather's name from a Spanish statesman.

Walter's father was born in Kingston, Ontario and was a church supervisor. He went in 1882 to Pheasant Forks, near Abernethy, Saskatchewan. Walter's mother came to Saskatchewan about the same time from England in a sailing ship. Walter was born at Willowbrook, west of Yorkton, Saskatchewan, moved to Laverna, Alberta in 1928 and the Peace in 1929. He is a cousin of Austin Willis.

Walter has produced seed grain in the Two Rivers District since 1931 and became a Robertson Associate of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association in 1966 at the Annual Convention held in Fort St. John. He was an "Original" of the Beaverlodge Brass Band which Col.

Lyle put on a firm basis in February 1930. Walter blew his brass horn faithfully for 40 years. He has always had a cheerful smile and time to pass the time of day. For several years he has lived in Beaverlodge during the winter months. One of his cherished possessions is a Bible dating back to about 1870. He attends the United Church.



Lawrence Lock's first cabin. Walter Willis and Doreen Lock.

#### OUR NEIGHBOURS

Two Rivers School District had its share of colorful persons. Remember Snowsled Larson? Suffice to say that when he bought a new cook stove he packed it on his back from Wembley rather than call on the assistance of his neighbors. A 98-pound sack of flour was scarcely a load, so he topped it with a sack of rolled oats.

Or Whitfield Cotton and his dog? He claimed the dog did not say much but thought a lot.

Or Hump Harris, when he frantically called Brother Leslie, who was feeding the horses. One more trip for oat bundles and Les would see what Humphrey wanted. By this time Hump was out-of-sorts. "Well, I just wanted to tell you that the house is on fire!"

Tom Roberts was an eccentric bachelor who was somewhat nonplussed when his dog stole a loaf of homemade bread from Alf Perdue, but more nonplussed when it took the dog half a day to drag it home! Art Funnell was also nonplussed with Tom one day when he asked Tom to pay for the last sack of flour he had bought, on time. Tom was hard of hearing and may not have got the message correctly. "Yes, I'll take another sack." Yes, Tom was deaf until he was asked to stay for a meal!

Tom, yes, but then there was Tom Torn. One is remembered as a constant source of bed bugs.

Remember the March 17 party at the school. Everyone was Irish it seemed except Les and Rowe Harris. Their contribution to the lunch was a bucket of mashed potatoes tinted Emerald Green. Another time Les contributed a 5-pound box of chocolates for an occasion and one youth with thoughts of depression values blurted out, "That's a whole load of oats."

One family had a bit of a problem; a neighbor came to watch television and stayed and stayed, well on into the night. After several such visits, the family retired at the end of their evening with the remark, "Just turn off the lights, George, when you leave."



Thrift in moderation is a virtue but it can be carried to extremes, such as when a Two Rivers bachelor had to have a tooth extracted. Yes, Dr. D. O. Carroll of Grande Prairie would give him a cut rate on two extractions. Henry's ailing molar was out. But where was the other tooth?

"He's in the waiting room", explained Henry, referring to his neighbor similarly afflicted. Dr. Carroll was true to his word.

Another dentist encountered a patient who was much too busy at home to linger in the torture chair. The diagnosis was a loose upper tooth, also a loose lower tooth, both in need of extraction. The patient was firm, "Extract the upper tooth only. The lower is less likely to fall out."

There was a group of men in the Two Rivers District who liked to get together and berate the government. They called themselves the I.W.W.'s but whether they actually belonged to the Independent Wood Workers Union of America or whether the initials meant, "I Won't Work" — or "I Want Women" — or "I Want Wine" was never really clear. Gunner Helberg, Jack Skolseg, O. B. Rowley, Ben Stark and Sam Brown were names of some of the free thinkers who kept Two Rivers lively.

Tom Russell, nicknamed the "Deacon", settled on S.W. 34-70-10-W6. Several of the first church services were held at his place. He was known locally to be sort of a small time geologist. He was quoted as saying the quickest way to dehorn cattle was to shoot the horns off.

Edward Gibbs, Mickey Gibbs to most of us was a 1913 settler and was located on N.E. 28-70-10-W6. This

supposedly wealthy gentleman hired Clarence Lossing to break 20 acres for him. Clarence with his oxen and breaking plough headed eight miles south and moved in with Gibbs. After Clarence fought mosquitoes, heel flies and other pests and after many days hard work to do the job he received the sad news that there was no money to pay for the breaking. Clarence told Gibbs he would take the \$50 Waltham watch he was wearing and that would at least make a payment on the breaking. Clarence has never forgotten the reprimand he received from his folks when he arrived home with the big railroad watch instead of the cash. The watch was all he ever received for his work.

Yes, times were hard in the early days and each family lived according to their resources. One man, in particular was very careful with the family grubstake. When it was decided that his wife would do some cooking, he would unlock the family trunk, draw out the necessary amounts of flour, sugar, etc. and lock the chest again. It is not recorded his wife's reaction to the procedure.

Their son, a bachelor also had his "ways". The story goes that somewhere, possibly in the Klondike, he learned that "Twenty Mule Team Borax" would make bread rise well, hence he used it freely. The bread did rise and rise and soon it would overflow the pans and flow out into the oven. Ultimately, if not blocked, it would flow out on to the floor. But our cook had a check to such: The catch on the oven door was broken but the door could be held fast with a large chunk of firewood.





The Red Willow Falls.

# WEST END

## THE WEST END STORY

In the very early thirties, five families with 18 school-age children among them, settled between the Caribou school district and the B.C. border.

Jim Ball, a great accordion player and son Ted lived south on the banks of the Red Willow. Ted rode a sorrel horse the three miles to school and we considered him quite a ball player.

The Clifford and Eldon Best families used the same trail. They were fun-loving folk. When Irene's sister Violet was born to Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Best — she was the first new baby in West End area.

Josephine Bagley was one of the 18 pupils in the school. Her father, Joe Bagley, having known Harry Lauder and having sung with George Formby during World War I would entertain us for hours.

Vinie and Edna Meraw, with their family of eight homesteaded one mile north of West End school. Mrs. Meraw was correspondent for the Grande Prairie Herald. She had much to report from this lively district. We had talent nights, kids' night, community plays. People travelled many miles to enjoy our Christmas concerts.

The Earl and Harry Nichol families moved in north and west of the school. Ralph and Stan, Earl's boys, were of school age. Their sister Hazel took care of their home. Clifford, Harry's son was also ready for



Harry Meraw (L) and Ted Ball (R), 1932.



Linden Nelson, Frank O'Connell, Howard Meraw and friend.



school. Blanche was born to Harry and Rose Nichol at this time.

Who was Peg, of Peg's Meadow, where we caught frogs, swam or skated? Did anyone ever find out why Bob Hutcheson always had figs and raisins for the kids? The Nelson brothers, Steve Lynden with Big Bill Logan, herded sheep further north. Bill Keiver homesteaded near the school. Remember huge, grizzly-haired Frank Page? He built a cabin away west near the B.C. border. Once in a while he would go to Beaverlodge to forget his troubles. This took two or three days. His greatest enjoyment was to catch someone with his back turned long enough to slip his glass eye into the mug of beer.

Ed and Andy Moore, later Jake, farmed east of the school — the last farm west of Rio Grande and now owned by Glen Dixson. Their sister Rose, married the



Nellie McLaughlin, Betty, Vince and Edna Meraw.



Building Wayne Chamberlain's house.



Ed Moore's house.





A water wheel powering Lindbloom's sawmill at Red Willow Falls, 1930.



Edna and Vince Meraw and baby deer at the homestead.

Shortie Chamberlain and Jimmy Bagley.



hunter, Wayne Chamberlain who lived south of them. Earl Chamberlain (Shorty) farmed across the road from Moores.

Mr. Albert Lynn, a tall, quiet, stately gentleman did not stay long. His fiancée was on the ill-fated Titanic.

None of these bachelors was fortunate enough to win any of our three teachers — Miss Margaret Stewart, Miss Ella Holtz and Miss Margaret Hardisty.

Before the school closed the Hugh McBryan family came in from Lake Saskatoon. Still later Andrew Lindblum moved in by the Red Willow Falls to build a mill. The Millsap family and the Kelly family came and went. Does anyone hear of them anymore?



Harry Meraw and Faye and Delbert Elliott.



## THE KIEVER BROTHERS

Bill, Reg and Clarence Kiever came from Chatham, Ontario around 1924. They took up land west of Rio Grande and their first living quarters was a sod shack built like a teepee.

Reg had a speech impediment but at the drop of a hat he would recite Robert Service poems fluently. He was a cook in World War I.

Clarence was in World War I also and later married Elenore Hagen and twins were born to them. It was a wild trip when neighbors were trying to beat the stork to the hospital on the old town site. Soon they were met by Dr. Nixon near town and stood the shock of twins. The neighbors also tell of the time Clarence was on the threshing crew and made his bed on a pile of bundles. Then someone drove a pitch fork into the pile and out came Clarence in a real rage.

In his heyday Bill would hitch up his old team and set out on the seven mile drive to the Rio Grande store. He would get there by noon, then give his team a few bundles. He would visit while he got his groceries for a month and arrive home in the evening.



Kiever's sod house.

## THE LECKIE STORY

'Cam' Leckie and his wife Lucy moved from Calgary where he had been managing a ranch, to Grande Prairie in 1919. After a few years driving the waterwagon, Cam and his family of four girls — Hazel, who married Fred Thompson of Hermit Lake, Blanche, who married Berger Bolin and on his decease married George Jennings of Clairmont, Lucy, who married Tom Williams of Hazelmere and Jean, who married Bert Dalgleish also of Hazelmere, moved to a farm west of Rio Grande.

The trip was made in the spring in a couple of

sleighs loaded with the family goods plus chickens, rabbits, and horses. The Leckie homestead was a haven for all the bachelors in the immediate area, naturally with four 'Belles' introduced into the district. Cam always met neighbors with the standard greeting "Put your horses in the barn and come on in." His wife's ingenuity at stretching eggs a long way and in various forms was a boon and a blessing in those homestead and depression days.

Cam did a great deal of work for the Rio Grande sports and was one of the main instigators for the building of the Rio Grande hall.

The Leckie house was a great place for impromptu dances on a Friday night; Mrs. Leckie's cooking for the weekend would disappear, the girls would be danced off their feet and the linoleum off the floor. "We didn't have too much of this world's goods but man did we have fun." We think Mother Leckie was the only one who grew poppies on the sod roof of her house and also banked the house with cow manure to grow the tallest sweet peas around. It was really a "Flower House" where everyone loved to come and stay awhile.

Hazel seemed to have lots of fun with the bachelors as she had beautiful red hair and could do all the Scottish dances and boy did she love to dance. She now lives at Bear Lake, 5½ miles from Grande Prairie where she has a beautiful garden which everyone is welcome to come and see.

Blanche's favorite trick when she saw some bachelor coming was to run to the woodpile and grab a buck saw. Naturally the bachelors would offer to cut wood for her. I don't believe Blanche ever cut a stick of wood in her life!

Lucy had one of the fastest driving teams in the country and used to drive Bert Funnell's orchestra to the dances. There were many horse races going home from those dances, with Tom Williams and Bert Funnell singing "Nearer My God to Thee."

Lucy, Hazel and Blanche used to ride horseback to Grande Prairie to see a show at Donald's Theater, a distance of 100 miles round trip. On one of these trips they decided they needed new hats so went into Mrs. Hedman's Hat Shoppe dressed in their riding outfits to try them on. They didn't think the hats would survive in the saddle pockets going home so they wore them. These didn't quite match their riding outfits but they looked really good with a dress for the July 1 sports.

Jean rode 17 miles round trip to Rio Grande school as there weren't enough children to have a school in the Mount Valley district. It was Lucy's job to see that her horse was fed and watered so she could arrive at school on time and she was never late. She now lives on Bert Dalgleish's Evergreen Ranch at Hazelmere where they raise Quarter horses.

Homestead Days — those were the days.

## ED AND ANDY MOORE

Ed and Andy Moore were born at Eureka, North Dakota of German extraction. In 1901 the family moved to farm in Cypress Hills area. When the father died the family was dispersed and Ed took his schooling in Medicine Hat, commencing 1910. In 1915 he enlisted in the 3rd Battalion, CMR and served overseas



for the duration. He was awarded the M.M. at Amiens and the M.S.M. for gallantry at Vimy Ridge. Andy enlisted in the 175 Canadian Regiment at Medicine Hat in 1916 and served for the duration.

After the war Ed and Andy, together with Wayne Chamberlain and his wife Rosie (Moore) settled in the West End district. Wayne died in 1942. Rosie lived with her brothers until her death in 1972.

The Moores were good farmers. They ran cattle on the open range to the west, were the first in their district to grow sweet clover and in 1943 commenced growing crested wheat grass for seed. Much of their grain and flax production was registered and sold as seed. They sold to Glen Dixson and are living, retired in Beaverlodge. Andy did not marry but Ed married Mary Aikens, also of Medicine Hat and the widow of James Aikens, one-time butcher of Grande Prairie.

Ed Moore had many experiences on the homestead and was a good community worker. He was always good natured but behind that smile was the determination to get on with the job.



Pte. Ed Moore, 3rd Battalion, CMR.



Ed Moore's sawmill (L) Jack Collins, Ed Goodman, Ed Moore, Andy Moore (R).



Ed Moore on "Topsy".



Andy Moore stooking oats.

### THE CLIFFORD NICHOL STORY

In 1931 at the age of 11 years Clifford Nichol came to the Peace country from Medicine Hat with his dad Harry and stepmother Rose Nichol and his half brothers and sisters, Ron, Jean and Blanche. Larry was born later.

Harry Nichol and his brother Earl and family homesteaded in the West End district with the idea of starting a ranch. Harry worked as brakeman on the C.P.R. at Drumheller and moved there from his farm





The Cliff Nichol family.

in 1940, then from Drumheller to Medicine Hat where he retired in 1964.

At the age of 13 Cliff did chores for Wayne Chamberlain for his room and board and attended the West End school. His hair was so fair his friends nicknamed him Snowball. As a very young boy Cliff did all kinds of work from hauling grain 30 miles to Beaverlodge, stooking and threshing in the fall. There was so much good food at threshing time he would eat too much and get sick; a friend, Mrs. Duteau would put him to bed and look after him.

At the age of 16 he went to Barrhead to work and saved some money as he wanted to learn the whereabouts of his mother as he hadn't seen or heard of her from a very young age. He put an advertisement for lost persons in the paper; a friend of his mother contacted her and she answered the ad, so Clifford went to Kansas City, U.S.A. to his mother. He worked on a chicken farm while there until the war broke out in 1939 and he had to return to Canada.

On March 6, 1941 Cliff married Frances Wheatley and lived on his father's farm for two years, then moved south of Grande Prairie on the Wapiti where he hauled gravel when the Grande Prairie Airport was being built. In October, 1945 he moved to Beaverlodge and worked for Bill Harcourt on the Cats, brushing and breaking land, building seismic roads. From this he went working on oil rigs, and then became a heavy duty operator at the U.S. Air Base, Beaverlodge for 12 years.

Cliff received a letter of commendation "a call beyond duty for risking his own life" from the U.S. government for his action in saving a government vehicle that went out of control on Richmond Hill.

Despite all the work he was active in the community as a fireman and as a member of the B.P.O. Elks. He loved to go fishing. He and Walter Irby would spend some weekends at Two Lakes and come home with fish. One time he had a real bear story. Very early in the morning, fishing off the shore, Cliff heard



Nichol Family reunion, 1971. Seated: Roddie, Judy, Harold, Frances, Shauna, Harry, Rose, Barry. Standing, l-r: Jill, Kevin, Cindy, Cecil, Norma, Carole, Don, Rick, Bruce, Bradley, Valerie. Terry was absent.



Frances and Cecil Nichol at the homestead.

footsteps and turned to talk to Walter, came face to face with a bear, slapped the bear across the face with the fishing rod and won the race back to camp.

On November 15 he suffered a heart attack and passed away November 23, 1964 at the age of 44 years.

With their family of nine children, six boys and three girls, Frances continued to live in Beaverlodge. The four oldest boys are married. Cecil married Norma Foster and they have four children — Kevin, Shauna, Chris and Cameron. They farm in Beaverlodge. Don's wife is Carole Edgerton and there are two boys, Roddy and Rick. Don is sales manager at Jenner Motors in Edmonton. Harold married Doreen Hemerle. There are two stepsons, Jack and David. They live in Grande Prairie and are both employed at Proctor and Gamble. Bruce married Valerie Moe and they have two children, Bradley and Tanya. Bruce is with A.G.T. in Edmonton. Terry has completed his school and works with the I.G.A. in Beaverlodge. Barry, Cindy and twins, Judy and Jill are attending Junior and Senior High Schools and are very active in sports and music.

Frances is to be commended for encouraging and helping the family gain education and training for whatever vocation they choose.

In 1971 Harry and Rose visited Beaverlodge for a family reunion and to get acquainted with the grandchildren.

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Perhaps you have heard of the partners in the lumber business who got caught in the game of

economics; they were broke. However, they reorganized their approach. They farmed out one-third of the cut to the fellers, one-third to the sawyers and one-third to the sales staff. The management retained the remainder! One of the partners showed equal genius at house-building; the structure was built without benefit of a square or level, no mean trick.







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